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The Barn Opens at Gamble Sands, precursor to major expansion

The newest addition to the Gamble Sands golf, dining, and lodging experience 10 miles east of Brewster, The Barn, billed as the “newest dining hotspot and coolest hangout in town” opened March 7 in conjunction with the Sands course.

By **MIKE MALTAIS** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

The Barn fare boasts cold beers on draft, mouth-watering craft pizzas, and classic American-style menu items. It will help introduce the next evolution of the site development, a second 18-hole course with additional lodging facilities that will nearly double the size of the existing destination resort.

The latest expansion was announced in GolfWeek magazine in July 2022, broke ground in the fall of 2023, and is scheduled for a summer 2025 completion.

Voted the best new golf course when it opened in 2014, Gamble Sands continues to win accolades from players and publications dedicated to the sport.

- Golfweek - No. 1 Washington State Best Public Golf Courses.

- Golf - No. 14 Best Public Golf Courses in North America.

- Golf Digest - No. 38 America's 100 Greatest Public Courses.

The Sands and QuickSands

See **THE BARN** Page 8



MIKE MALTAIS/WARD MEDIA
The Barn, the new restaurant at Gamble Sands, is located adjacent to the Danny Boy Bar & Grill, opened for business March 7.

A second season is all about second chances for Wenatchee Bighorns



COURTESY OF WENATCHEE BIGHORNS

Davis describes his team as tough, fun, and high energy. SEE STORY PAGE 19

Prey's Fruit Barn to expand offerings with coffee bar and fiber arts space

For over 40 years, Prey's Fruit Barn has done what it was zoned to do: grow and sell fruit. Yet, the year-round fruit stand has much more to offer in terms of goods, with plans to add a coffee bar and fiber arts space in the late spring.

By **TAYLOR CALDWELL** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

“I feel like people don't realize what all we have in here, and the ones that do, know they can come in here and they know what to find. But I know there's still a lot of people that come in and will say, 'Oh my gosh, I didn't even know this was here,'” said Karin Jorgensen, Prey's Fruit Barn Manager.

Prey's d'anjou pears grown just behind the barn are still for sale, as well as a variety of apples grown across the valley.

However, fruit isn't the only locally sourced offering in the stand.

The shop sells honey made from beehives just across the river, salmon smoked by a family business in Cashmere, ice cream from Leavenworth, and landjaegers from Winthrop. Soon, the shop will also offer local lamb, beef, and fish.

The shop inventory looks slightly different than it did a

See **PREY'S FRUIT BARN** Page 8

inside:

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Cultivating resilience through second chances and innovation

Page 2

FINANCE

Your business tax savings might be doing more harm than good

Page 3

Year-round tax planning: Simple strategies to boost your refund

Page 4

Q&A

Meet Maria Guerra project designer at MJ Neal Associates.

Page 5

MARKETING MATTERS

Partnering for Success in OTT Advertising

Page 13

REAL ESTATE

Top Properties

Douglas County February Page 13

Top Properties

Chelan County February. Page 14

Existing home sales vaulted 9.5% in February, largest monthly increase in a year. Page 16

LABOR REPORT

Wenatchee MSA job market surges, outpacing state

Page 18

Washington State faces higher labor underutilization than U.S. in 2023

Page 18

April 2024 Association Newsletter

The 2024 Home Tour & Remodeling Expo is coming this September! – Page 9

Welcome Back: From Shambles to Chic! – Page 11

Springtime is Here! – Page 12



\$2

Terry Ward

CEO & Publisher
terry@ward.media
509-731-3284

Amy M. Yaley

COO & Co-Owner
amy@ward.media
509-731-3321

Mike Maltais

Reporter
michael@ward.media

Quinn Propst

Reporter
quinn@ward.media

Taylor Caldwell

Reporter
taylor@ward.media

Sherrie Harlow

Advertising Sales Manager
sherrie@ward.media
253-255-5920

RuthEdna Keys

Advertising Sales Executive
ruth@ward.media
509-682-2213

Denise Buchner

Advertising Sales Executive
denise@ward.media
406-599-3869

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CONTACT INFO**
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Cultivating resilience through second chances and innovation

By **Terry Ward** | CEO and Publisher

In times of uncertainty, the stories of local businesses and organizations serve as a beacon of hope and a masterclass in resilience.

As the CEO and Publisher of Ward Media, it is both humbling and inspiring to witness firsthand the adaptability and innovation within our North Central Washington community. This month, the Wenatchee Business Journal highlights how resilience is not just about surviving; it's about thriving through creativity, community engagement, and the willingness to embrace second chances.

The Wenatchee Bighorns' journey through their inaugural struggles to a season of revival underlines the essence of resilience.

Faced with leadership changes and challenges, the Bighorns' narrative is a testament to the power

of persistence and the spirit of second chances. With new managing owner Shawn Coopriider and Head Coach JP Davis at the helm, the team has embraced a reboot, focusing on foundational growth, community connection, and the relentless pursuit of improvement.

Their story is a reminder that setbacks can pave the way for significant comebacks, reinforcing the importance of adaptability and strategic planning in business.

Similarly, the expansion of Gamble Sands and the evolution of Prey's Fruit Barn illustrate resilience through innovation and diversification.

The Barn, Gamble Sands' latest dining hotspot, marks the beginning of a major expansion that promises to enrich the golf, dining, and lodging experience in our region.

This venture is built on a vision of creating a world-class destination by leveraging the natural beauty and resources of North Central Washington, showcasing resilience through ambitious growth and development.

Prey's Fruit Barn's expansion to include a coffee bar and fiber arts space highlights another dimension of resilience: community engagement and diversification. By broadening its offerings beyond fruit sales to create a communal gathering space, Prey's is responding to changing consumer needs and interests, fostering a sense of community while also tapping into new market opportunities.

These stories, rich in lessons of perseverance, strategic innovation, and community involvement, underscore the multifaceted nature of resilience.

For businesses to thrive in uncertain times, it's crucial to remain flex-

From the Publisher



ible, seize second chances for renewal, and always keep the community at the heart of operations.

As we move forward, let's carry these lessons into our practices.

Whether it's embracing a second chance, innovating our approach, or strengthening community ties, the path to resilience is multifaceted. Here's to thriving in uncertain times by cultivating resili-

ence, together.

To resilience, growth, and prosperity.

Terry Ward is the CEO of Ward Media and the publisher of the Cashmere Valley Record, Lake Chelan Mirror, The Leavenworth Echo, Quad City Herald, and the Wenatchee Business Journal. He can be reached at terry@ward.media.

Building Regional Technology Workforce Capacity: A Leap Forward with the Good Jobs Challenge Grant

It's no secret that there is a growing number of incredible, well-paid technology-related jobs in North Central Washington. Young people, job seekers, and individuals who want to develop new skills and land one of these jobs will soon have access to a number of training and career support to help them land one of these jobs.

By **Dr. Sue Kane, CEO** | NCW Tech Alliance
Sponsored by Microsoft

The North Central Career Connect Washington Network, led by SkillSource and the North Central Educational Services District (NCESD), has partnered with Statewide non-profit, Computing for All to bring some of the Federal Good Jobs funding into the region and kicked off a regional consortia of skilling and development partners to help prepare 172 local individuals for technology roles in the next two years.

The Regional Network has assembled a consortium of partners that will receive funding over the next two years to work collectively to build out an inclusive workforce

pipeline for the technology sector in the region.

NCESD has been at the forefront of regional strategies for the development of career connected learning paths for young people across the region. Notably, this included the development of the State's first Data Center Prep Program, last year in Quincy, which allows high school students access to skills training and credentials starting in high school.

The pathway completes with one year of courses at Big Bend Community College and a certificate that set a student up for hire as Data Center Technicians with local employers like NTT, Sabey, Vantage, and Microsoft. NCESD is cur-

rently working with the Wenatchee School District to expand the program to students in Wenatchee in 2024.

SkillSource has been equally instrumental in the development of the regional workforce strategy as the regional home for the North Central Workforce Development Board. SkillSource ensures that there are programs and access for the often overlooked segments of the population.

From rural and dispersed communities to the long-term unemployed and underemployed, SkillSource is casting a wide net to include those with sporadic or no labor force attachment, incumbent

workers within tech businesses, disconnected youth, low-income individuals, and those with justice involvement. SkillSource is dedicating resources to incumbent worker training, aiding local businesses in the tech sector, and those employing technology-centric occupations.

The goal is clear: to provide these groups with the opportunity to thrive in the tech sector.

In addition to NCESD and SkillSource, both Big Bend Community College (BBCC) and Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) will also be receiving funding to support students in technology, IT and Data Center Programs.

The combined service area of WVC and BBCC encompasses Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Okanogan, and Adams counties.

In addition to industry-aligned skills training and credentialing, both colleges provide students with career services and job placement support.

Both comprehensive community colleges offer high school diplomas, asso-

ciate degrees, professional and technical certificates, and applied baccalaureate degrees. In the last year, students at Big Bend and Wenatchee Valley College were awarded 278 industry credentials aligned to the technology sector.

Other partners including NCW Tech Alliance, the Apple STEM Network and generator will work to support the effort with complimentary contributions to ensure that the investment reaches across the region.

The initiative is not just about funding; and it's more than a series of initiatives; it's a commitment to the future of the tech industry and the individuals who will lead it.

It's about creating a sustainable ecosystem that supports the entire journey of a tech professional – from education to employment.

The funding will be used to add staffing capacity to SkillSource, NCESD, Big Bend Community College, and Wenatchee Valley College to support this project

Finance

Beau Ruff

Contributor for Ward Media



Your business tax savings might be doing more harm than good

Small business owners sometimes have an enviable opportunity to save on tax. They rightfully look for every loophole to which they are entitled to save money on taxes by deducting various business expenses. But, some choose to take it a bit further. They engage in more aggressive tactics to mitigate their overall income tax burden by shifting personal expenses over to the business. Sometimes, these tactics are advanced by the business owner's own CPA to interpret tax code deductions liberally. Most understand the potential tax repercussions of improper deductions – the IRS coming for taxes due. But, in addition to IRS woes from playing in a “grey” area for deductions, the business owner might simultaneously be increasing his or her personal legal liability to potential creditors.

Starting with an example, assume small business owner Beau (no relation to the author) wants to

minimize taxes. He might use his company card to pay for gas for his personal vehicle or even completely write off a personal use vehicle. He might pay for the family vacation to Hawaii under the auspices of business travel to “look for business opportunities” in the Aloha state. He might pay his home utilities with business funds because he sometimes works out of the home. He might buy new computers as a business expense when the connection to business work is really weak at best. All of these examples might be legitimate business expenses... or they might be characterized as personal expenses. For the sake of the example, assume that the expenses fall on the personal side.

Now, because the business has so many deductions, it has little to no income (on which to pay taxes) but also little to no assets (with which to pay valid claims) because so much has been pushed through to the owner



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through dubious deductions. Assume then that a creditor sues the small business for \$1M for a valid claim. The attorney for the small business defends by asserting: (1) the small business is an entity recognized in Washington, so the owner has no personal liability, and (2) the company has no assets with which to pay the claim. Typically, a creditor has no recourse against the owner of a corporation for corporate debts. It is at this point that the creditor attempts to disregard the corporate protections and go after the owner's personal assets.

Many small businesses opt to incorporate or become a limited liability company. Notice all the “INCs” and “LLCs” popping up at the end of business names. To become a legally recognized entity like a corporation or a Limited Liability Company (LLC) means something very important to the business owner. It means the owner obtains legal protection from personal liability. Corporations and LLCs are “an ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility,” according to the American writer Ambrose Bierce. But, in some cir-

cumstances, individuals can be held responsible for the corporation's actions (and debts).

The legal concept that would allow a business owner to lose liability protection is referred to as “Piercing the Corporate Veil,” and it can allow the court to disregard the liability protection and allow creditors to seek recompense from the personal coffers of the business owner. The concept was developed over time and made applicable to both corporations as well as LLCs. RCW 2.5.15.061. It disallows liability protection where the business owner misuses the corporate form of business.

Veil piercing is warranted when the business owner commingles “his personal affairs with those of the corporation such as to warrant imposition of personal liability.” *Nw. Cascade, Inc. v. Unique Constr., Inc.*, No. 71061-3-I (Wash. App. Mar 31, 2014) citing *McCombs Bierce, Inc. v. Barnes*, 645

P.2d 1131, 32 Wn.App. 70 (Wash. App. 1982)

Back to the example above. If the creditor can prove that the business owner commingled his personal affairs with the business's corporate affairs (as suggested in the facts), thus causing harm to the creditor (i.e., lack of funds in the company to pay the creditor), that creditor might be able to pierce the corporate veil of Beau's company and seek to collect from Beau's personal assets.

The risks are high when playing fast and loose with corporate governance rules. Get your CPA and attorney on the same page as you explore grey area deductions in order to best protect your business from the possibility of a creditor piercing your corporate veil.

Beau Ruff, a licensed attorney and certified financial planner, is the director of planning at Cornerstone Wealth Strategies in Kennewick, WA.

Washington State sees job growth slow, unemployment rise in February

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Washington's economy added 2,600 jobs in February, but the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.7%, marking the highest level since 2021 and the fifth straight month of rising joblessness.

The latest employment figures released by the Employment Security Department signal a potential shift away from

the extremely tight labor market that characterized the post-COVID pandemic period.

“Over the past several months, the unemployment rate has increased bit by bit,” said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, the department's chief labor economist. “That 4.7% unemployment rate signals a possible shift from an unusually tight labor market.”

Job growth remains positive overall but has slowed considerably in recent months as employment increases in some sectors, such as education/health services and transportation, but declines in others, like professional/business services.

Digging into the details, seven major industry sectors expanded payrolls in February while six contracted.

The biggest gains were

in education/health services (+2,200 jobs) and transportation/warehousing (+1,600).

The steepest losses were in professional/business services (-2,700). Over the past year through February, Washington gained an estimated 52,000 jobs, led by education/health,

government and leisure/hospitality. But sectors like information, construction and retail saw significant annual job losses.

The slowing state labor market mirrors the national trend, as the U.S. unemployment rate also edged up to 3.9% in February from 3.6% a year

earlier.

State labor officials say the rising unemployment rate combined with slower job growth could mark an inflection point as the white-hot economy cools from the hiring frenzy of the past couple of years following pandemic shutdowns.

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Finance

Year-round tax planning: Simple strategies to boost your refund

Tyler Kert

Contributor for Ward Media



So, you filed your taxes for 2023. Now, you can sit back, relax, and not even think about taxes until next year. Right? Wrong. The truth is the tax you pay is ultimately a result of decisions that you make throughout the entire year. No matter how good your CPA might be, they are not going to be able to retroactively fix problems that can arise from a failure to plan. Now, the goal is not to try to avoid paying the taxes that you owe. However there are many legitimate ways that you can reduce your tax liability. If you'd like to pay less tax, come next April, the time to start is now.

What should you do from now through the end of the year to be prepared for next tax season? Here are a few ideas that could increase your refund by the time next April rolls around.

Contribute to an IRA

An IRA, or individual retirement account, is one of the most well-known investment accounts when saving for retirement. In addition to offering long-term growth through investing in the market, deductions are available to

those who contribute to an IRA.

If you decide to contribute to an IRA, you'll have to decide between a traditional IRA and a Roth IRA. The question you need to answer is this: Do I want the tax deduction now or later? If you contribute to a traditional IRA, you can write off that contribution as a deduction in the current year. On the other hand, a Roth IRA offers no deduction now but allows your money to grow and be withdrawn tax-free when you take it out after age 59 ½. If you believe your highest earning years are ahead of you, the Roth option may be the better choice because you will pay a lower tax rate now than you will later, assuming your income increases. On the other hand, if you think you are earning more now than you will in retirement, consider a traditional IRA to maximize your tax savings.

So, how much can contributing to an IRA really save you in taxes? If you were to make the maximum \$7,000 contribution (the maximum is \$8,000 for investors over age 50) in 2024 and you are paying a 24% effective tax rate, your tax liability would be reduced by \$1,680. Es-



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entially, you are putting \$7,000 towards your future retirement, and your net cash out of pocket is only \$5,320. IRAs are popular for a reason. The tax savings and investment growth potential make them a valuable component of a financial plan.

Contribute to a Health Savings Account

Health Savings Accounts, or HSAs as they are commonly known, were established in 2003. Many people have heard of HSAs but don't know their full capabilities. HSAs are often overlooked because you can only contribute if you have a high-deductible health insurance plan. But for those who qualify, HSAs are a great wealth-building tool. Not only that, but HSAs offer a unique triple tax advantage.

HSAs are tax-deductible when you make a contribution, grow tax-deferred, and can be withdrawn tax-free if the proceeds are used for qualified medical expenses. Initially, this doesn't sound like a great retirement option because you can only withdraw tax-free money for medical expenses. However, some features can make an HSA much more attractive.

Many people don't realize that there is no time limit on taking HSA reimbursements. If you save

your medical receipts, you can "reimburse" yourself whenever you would like. If you're willing to save receipts for years or even decades, you can give your HSA time to grow in value. Then, in retirement, that roof replacement won't force you to take an extra IRA withdrawal and bump you into a higher tax bracket. Instead, grab those receipts, and you can withdraw the money tax-free from your HSA.

The last fact about HSAs that further enforces their viability as a wealth-building tool is the provision that allows money to be withdrawn penalty-free once you reach age 65. This allows your HSA to essentially turn into a traditional IRA with a tax-free medical expense benefit once you reach age 65.

Finally, the IRA and HSA are only two of many ways to reduce the tax you owe. If you're already con-

tributing the maximum amount to your IRA, you might consider looking into tax-deferred annuities or municipal bond strategies to reduce your tax liability. If you would like to be proactive and ensure you are ready for next April, I recommend meeting with your tax advisor to optimize your situation. If your financial advisor doesn't have a tax background, you might get a second opinion from one that does. If nothing else, consider an IRA or an HSA to put some money away for retirement and keep a little more of your hard-earned money in your own pocket.

Tyler Kert, a licensed financial advisor and CPA, provides financial planning and tax consulting services at Tamarack Wealth Management in Cashmere, WA.

Good Jobs

Continued from page 2

as essential parts of a comprehensive approach that includes workforce preparation activities, supportive services, case management, and referrals to other community and agency partners.

NCESD has selected, Nikki Medved, Instructional Worksite Learning Coordinator to lead this consortia and manage the project for the region.

Medved's excited about the potential impact of this regional work, "This work is so inspiring. We are working together to help students prepare for future careers through hands-on professional work experiences with wrap-around supports. Our collaboration empowers students and young adults to navigate their path to great technology jobs, and I couldn't be more excited to be a part of this project!"

The consortium will work

over the next two years through employer engagement, candidate outreach and recruitment, career navigation, soft skills and career readiness training, and wraparound services aligned with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Additionally, technology degree and certificate programs through Big Bend Community College and Wenatchee Valley College, career launch endorsements, and CompTIA industry certifications are part of the comprehensive training offerings.

With a target completion date of September 30, 2025, the Good Jobs Grant anticipates achieving a total

of 173 job placements across Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties.

This goal encompasses diverse opportunities such as paid internships, apprenticeships, contracts, and permanent positions.

This initiative represents a significant step forward in regional technology workforce development. It's an effort that not only addresses the immediate needs of the tech industry but also lays the groundwork for a resilient and diverse workforce capable of driving innovation and growth for years to come.

It's a great time to be in North Central Washington if you're looking to be a part of this exciting journey!

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Q & A



Meet Maria Guerra, project designer at MJ Neal Associates

By **Quinn Propst** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

Met Maria Guerra project designer at the architectural firm MJ Neal Associates. Although architecture has always been her true calling, Guerra has followed a winding path back to it after serving in the educational realm for many years.

Guerra is focused on finding solutions, overcoming obstacles, continuously learning and advocating for youth. She is passionate about investing in the next generation through her volunteer work in the community. Guerra volunteers with various organizations including the Washington Apple Education Foundation, the Apple STEM Network, the St. Joseph Catholic School Advisory Council and the Eastmont School District Migrant Student career exploration workshops.

Please tell our readers about MJ

Neal Associates.

MJN Associates Architects is a general practice architectural firm that specializes in meeting the needs of our clients.

With over 35 years of experience, the firm provides design and development solution services from Schematic Design, Design Development, Construction Documents and Permitting, and all the way through construction.

We have a diverse range of projects: fire stations, law and justice, healthcare, retail, offices, religious facilities, multi-family and residential.

How long have you been in this role?

I have been a Project Designer for the last six and a half years.

Tell our readers a little bit about yourself.

I'm a creative thinker, problem solver, avid learn-

er and advocate for our youth.

What led you to this position?

It has been a windy journey. My mother often advised me as a child "You should be a teacher or a counselor when you grow up," meanwhile I wanted to become an Architect. My forte was math and art—I felt drawn to color, design, geometry and all that defined architecture. In my 8th grade class registration meeting, the counselor discouraged me from taking computer aided drafting courses – "It's mostly boys that take these classes." Indeed, I was the minority in the male/female student ratio. By my senior year, I enrolled in advanced drafting and architecture courses. My confidence and determination grew paralleled to my skill set.

I pursued architecture at Washington State University and earned my Bach-

elor of Science in Architectural Studies 2007 and Master of Architecture in 2008.

As a first-generation, farmworking background, Mexican female, one of my greatest accomplishments is graduating. I flourished with my odds.

The 2008-2009 economic crisis affected many professions, in particular the architecture and construction industry. This led me to seek opportunities in the education realm. As the Washington State University CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) Recruiter. In this capacity, I provided admission and support services, financial aid literacy and career exploration to migrant, seasonal farmworking background students seeking to pursue their educational goals.

I continued my educational journey and I became the GEAR UP Director for the Eastmont School District in 2012. I did grant writing, budgeting, managing and implementing programs to support low-income, first generation students in post-secondary education.

Ten years later, I returned to my true calling – Architecture. I had to re-vamp my technical skills in drafting and 3D modeling, sharpen my vocabulary and learn how to implement new building codes – a world of differences.

I'm not a licensed architect yet, but am in the process of fulfilling the NCARB requirements to achieve that milestone in

my professional career.

What are you most looking forward to in your role?

Taking a project from the conceptual stage through construction.

What does a normal day look like as an architect (Project Designer)?

No day is alike – which adds excitement. One day may include several tasks: designing a commercial building, writing specifications, writing proposals, or visiting a construction site. The next day may include meetings, 3D project modeling or coordinating between consultants on building systems.

What is your favorite part of your job and why?

My favorite part of my job is finding design solutions with challenging parameters – It's like laying out 1,000 puzzle pieces and mapping them all together to understand the full picture.

Please tell our readers about your volunteer work in the community.

I am truly passionate about investing time in the next generation—their future | our future. I am involved in the Washington Apple Education Foundation scholarship, mentor and career programs, Apple STEM Network leadership team, career connected learning programs, St. Joseph Catholic School SAC

(School Advisory Council) and participating in the Eastmont School District Migrant Student career exploration workshops this summer.

Who or what inspires you?

My family inspires me. We hold mutual pride in what I have accomplished and my goals yet to be met. Learning to navigate through hardships and obstacles fuels my walk on this journey toward earning my licensure.

What do you like to do with your free time?

In my spare time, I enjoy gardening, traveling and exploring the outdoors, but above all spending time with my husband, Alex and two boys, Axel and Zyan.

Is there anything else you want our readers to know?

To the young readers: if you are interested in Architecture, I highly recommend taking a Computer Aided Drafting CAD or a 3D modeling program such as Revit, Sketchup, or Rhino. Challenge yourself to College-in the classroom courses, Running Start or take Pre-Calculus or Calculus and Art classes. Also, do research in colleges ahead of time and follow up with your high school counselor to confirm you are taking those requirements. Best wishes in your journey.

Quinn Propst: 509-731-3590 or quinn@ward.media

Leavenworth Library hires new branch librarian

By **Taylor Caldwell** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

NCW Libraries hired Hannah Kwon as Leavenworth's newest Branch Librarian, following Amy Massey's retirement earlier this year.

Kwon hopes to continue growing the library's outreach by expanding programming and using her research background to discover and meet the community's needs.

"One of the things that I would love to do in this library is to just help people realize it's more than just like a place to get a book... I really want it to be kind of like the intellectual, cultural center of the community, where you can come not only to find the resources you need, but to get help learning how to use those things to connect with other people," said Kwon.



TAYLOR CALDWELL/WARD MEDIA Hannah Kwon was hired as the Leavenworth Branch Librarian in February of this year.

Kwon is a librarian by training, with master's and doctoral degrees in Library and Information Science from Rutgers University. She previously worked as a Reference Librarian at Newark Pub-

lic Library in New Jersey, and has been a lecturer at Rutgers since 2016.

Although a majority of her background is based in New Jersey, Kwon has

See **KWON** Page 16

IF YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED IN A WENATCHEE BUSINESS JOURNAL Q&A, EMAIL QUINN@WARD.MEDIA



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Keeping Up with people

Cameron West receives Realtor of the Year award

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Cameron West has been awarded the Realtor of the Year award from the North Central Washington Association of Realtors, recognizing his commitment to profes-

sionalism, dedication, and client satisfaction in the real estate industry. This award marks a significant achievement in West's career, reflecting his consistent performance and ser-

vice quality. Working with Mike West Leavenworth Realty, Cameron West has proven his expertise and integrity, gaining clients' and peers' trust and respect. His knowledge of the real estate market and personalized service approach have been instrumental in his success.

On receiving the award, Cameron West shared, "I am deeply honored to receive the Realtor of the Year award. It is truly humbling to be recognized by my colleagues and industry professionals. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my clients and help them achieve their real estate goals."

The award highlights Cameron West's dedication to the real estate profession and efforts to exceed client expectations. It celebrates his role in the community and his impact on the industry.

COURTESY OF NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS
Cameron West (right) stands alongside his father and mentor, Mike West (left), celebrating Cameron's recent accolade as Realtor of the Year, a moment of pride and testament to their professional legacy in the real estate industry.



Local broker Diane Leigh honored with real estate achievement award

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Diane Leigh, a managing broker at RE/MAX Advantage, has been named the 2023 recipient of the Realtor Achievement Award by the North Central Washington Association of Realtors (NCWAR).

This highly coveted award recognizes Leigh's exceptional engagement with the association, active involvement in civic and community initiatives, and steadfast dedication to professionalism and ethical conduct within the real estate industry.

In her role at RE/MAX Advantage, Leigh has demonstrated remarkable leadership skills and an unwavering commitment to her colleagues and the communities she serves.

Her contributions to NCWAR, passion for community service, and upholding the highest ethical standards in real estate distinguished her as a truly deserving candi-

date for this esteemed honor. Leigh's accomplishments



Diane Leigh

extend far beyond her excellence as a broker. Her tireless efforts with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the Chelan Valley Housing Trust, and the non-profit Chelan to Africa showcase her dedication to creating positive change both locally in the Chelan Valley and on a global scale. Notably, her work with Chelan to Africa's Touching Tiny Lives initiative has made a significant

impact worldwide.

The Realtor Achievement Award is a revered accolade reserved for real estate professionals who exhibit outstanding service to their association, active engagement in civic and business matters, and an unwavering commitment to continuing education and the highest ethical conduct within the industry.

Leigh's substantial volunteer work, advocacy for affordable housing initiatives, and efforts to further education and professionalism among her peers embody these qualities.

Leigh's colleagues at RE/MAX Advantage expressed immense pride in her achievements and thanked her for her invaluable contributions to the company and the real estate community at large.

They described Leigh as an inspiration and a role model for aspiring professionals in the field.

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Keeping Up with people

Wenatchee Valley Dispute Resolution Center welcomes new board members

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

The Wenatchee Valley Dispute Resolution Center (WVDRC) has welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors – Luis Martinez-Rocha and Edgar Romero.

Martinez-Rocha holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's in entomology from Washington State University.

He relocated to the Wenatchee Valley three years ago to take a position in the Financial Aid Office at Wenatchee Valley College.

Since arriving, Martinez-Rocha has become involved with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee and Environmental Committee of the Wenatchee Rotary Club. He aims to apply his skills to further

WVDRC's mission.

Romero brings over four years of experience in the banking industry.

He currently serves as a Personal Banker at WaFD Bank. He is a member of the Hispanic Business Council for the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce and the DEI committee of the Wenatchee Rotary Club.

Having previously worked for nonprofits, Romero is a strong advocate for finding resolutions to conflicts.

The WVDRC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to changing relationships through peaceful conflict resolution in Chelan and Douglas counties.

To learn more about its services, the public can visit www.wvdr.org or call 509-888-0957.



Luis Martinez-Rocha



Edgar Romero

Stifel Wealth management team named to Forbes list

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Stifel Financial Corp. announced that the Taylor/Bryant Investment Group of its broker-dealer subsidiary Stifel, Nicolaus & Company has been named to Forbes' 2024 Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams list.

The Wenatchee-based team consists of financial advisors Kris Taylor, Roxanne Bryant, and Alisa Franklin.

With over 85 combined years of experience, the team specializes in developing tailored investment plans that align with clients' unique financial goals.

Forbes' annual ranking spotlights around 4,100 top-performing wealth management teams across the United States based on

research and interviews by SHOOK Research.

Stifel Financial Corp., headquartered in St. Louis, provides securities brokerage, investment banking, trading, and financial

advisory services through subsidiaries including Stifel Nicolaus and Keefe Bruyette & Woods.

The company also offers banking, trust, and lending services.



Kris Taylor



Alisa Franklin



Roxanne Bryant

Cascade School District honors exceptional employees in annual Excellence in Education Awards

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Cascade School District announced its Certificated and Classified Employees of the Year, part of the Excellence in Education Awards.

Initiated in 1985 by the North Central Educational Service District, the program honors remarkable individuals contributing unselfishly to student growth in schools.

Shelley Vandel, a 34-year teaching veteran, primarily in fourth grade within the district for 31 years, is this year's certificated recipient.

Holding a master's in educational administration and a bachelor's in elementary education, Vandel's teaching philosophy

is influenced by Theodore Roosevelt: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

A Leavenworth native, Vandel emphasizes the importance of students feeling loved and believes in the holistic development of a child. She has an extensive involvement in local performing arts, significantly contributing to students' confidence through directing numerous school productions.

Jenni Bunkelman, awarded the Classified Employee of the Year, has served as a PE paraeducator at Icicle River Middle School since 2021.

With a bachelor's in



Shelley Vandel



Jenni Bunkelman

PE and athletic training, Bunkelman has notably enhanced school spirit through organizing pep assemblies and field day activities, along with reviving the ASB student government.

Her initiatives include the creation of a "glam room" for dance events and securing over \$2,100

in grants for sports equipment, benefiting life skills special needs students.

Bunkelman's community involvement extends to coordinating a major holiday food drive and supporting the PTSA's events. Residing in Plain with her husband, she enjoys various outdoor activities and community engagement.

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TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA
Prey's Fruit Barn is open year round, and sells local food, art and housewares.

Prey's Fruit Barn

Continued from page 1

few years ago, pivoting from Prey's branded items to showcasing local businesses.

Almost every item, from handmade pasta to peanut butter, comes from Washington state. Items sourced elsewhere haven't traveled far either, typically coming from Oregon, Idaho, and Montana.

The fruit stand also features a variety of local artisanry, such as jewelry and pottery, but other items, such as refillable dog spray and laundry soap, may be more surprising.

While Jorgensen has spearheaded the shop's new inventory, her focus has been on creating

a community gathering space.

"I want the whole farm to feel like a community space, just some place to come where you can meet people and get off your cell phone. I mean, you could bring your laptop if you have to do some work," said Jorgensen.

Jorgensen has plans to revive the picnic area and add outside seating out front this spring, but her biggest project is remodeling the barn's vacant interior space.

Jorgensen hopes to reopen the space as a coffee shop that will have a full espresso machine and light bites, with spacious seating for meeting friends or getting some work done.

Yet unlike other cof-



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA
The shop still sells locally grown fruit this time of year, including Prey's very own pears.

fee shops, it will also be a space where fiber arts hobbyists can buy locally dyed yarn and other supplies, spin their yarn, and gather for activities and workshops.

Since the yarn shop that previously occupied the space closed a couple of years ago, Jorgensen has continued to stock yarn in the main shop, but yearned to bring back a space for Stitch Circles, where people of all ages and abilities can socialize with each other while they knit, crochet, or embroider.

"There's not a lot of plac-

es or opportunities where you could have a seven year-old and a 90 year-old totally hanging out together," said Jorgensen.

Jorgensen hopes to restart the Stitch Circles later this spring, when she opens the coffee and fiber arts shop.

A date has yet to be set for the opening. However, Prey's Fruit Barn will continue to sell fruit, yarn, and other goods every day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 11007 Highway 2.

Taylor Caldwell:
509-433-7276 or
taylor@ward.media



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA
Manager Karin Jorgensen stocks the new coffee and fibers arts shop, which is slated to open later this spring.

Quick Read

Prey's Fruit Barn, a year-round stand known for over 40 years for growing and selling fruit, is expanding its offerings to include a coffee bar and fiber arts space this spring. Managed by Karin Jorgensen, the barn goes beyond its renowned d'anjou pears and a variety of apples, featuring locally sourced products like honey, smoked salmon, and artisanal items from Washington state. Jorgensen's vision extends to transforming the barn into a community gathering spot, complete with a revived picnic area and outdoor seating. The forthcoming coffee shop will cater to fiber arts enthusiasts, offering locally dyed yarn, spaces for Stitch Circles, and aiming to foster intergenerational socializing. Prey's Fruit Barn continues to evolve while maintaining its traditional sale of fruit and local goods at 11007 Highway 2.

The Barn

Continued from page 1

Course at Gamble Sands are located on 115 acres of fine fescue grasses, designed by renowned golf course architect David McLay Kidd.

Players are greeted with panoramic vistas of the Cascade Mountains and Columbia River meandering through the distance on every hole. No airplanes overhead or passing traffic distract from the quiet solitude broken only by the occasional bird songs in the background.

Kidd, owner of DMK Golf Design in Bend, was born and raised in Scotland and grew up in the game as the son of a golf course superintendent. His father's passion for the game rubbed off on Kidd at an early age; as a teenager he worked at his father's courses helping with daily maintenance as well as a few renovation projects.

His informal education gave Kidd a head start for his formal education at Writtle College on the outskirts of London where he studied Horticulture and Landscape Design. He then interned with Southern Golf Construction, Europe's largest golf

construction company, before gaining more real-world experience at a small design and construction management firm in England. There he developed his ideas for golf course design as well as the construction process.

Kidd's breakthrough came 25 years ago with the launch of Bandon Dunes, in Bandon, Oregon, in 1999. Success at Bandon led to more acclaimed projects:

- Nanea Golf Club at Kailua-Kona, Hawaii in 2003.

- TPC of San Francisco Bay at Stonebrae in 2007.

- Tetherow Golf Course at Bend, Oregon in 2008.

Said Kidd of the Gamble Sands project: "This is the once in a lifetime site every golf designer dreams of, rolling sand dunes overlooking a large body of

water, a developer willing to build golf just for the love of the game, It's just golf on sand, golf as it was truly meant to be."

Kidd also designed the newest Gamble addition taking shape on acreage west of Sands Trail Road leading to the lodging, dining, and parking facilities.

Gebbers Family

Landowners like the Gebbers Family are a rare commodity in the golf course construction world. Most courses have a limited amount of acreage, many with home sites and supporting infrastructure to navigate – all affecting the final design.

None of that was an issue when the Gebbers Family partnered with OB Sports Golf Management founder and Northwest

native, Orrin Vincent, to conceptualize a no-limits, world class golf resort – in the middle of thousands of acres of Gebbers apple and cherry orchards, a three-hour drive from Spokane and just 75 miles north of Wenatchee.

The concept of Gamble Sands began with the Gebbers' vision of a high-end, Pacific Northwest destination resort community highlighted by a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The first step – the debut of the highly acclaimed 18-hole Sands course – broke ground in 2012 and set the foundation for a future that includes a second 14-hole course, Quicksands. The latest as-yet-unnamed new course builds on the success of its predecessors.

The development of the second Gamble Sands golf course is documented in a multi-platform series by The Fire Pit Collective, a multimedia company founded by golf writer Matt Ginella. A preview of the series can be viewed on YouTube at youtube/2f6fkh0Ewdc.

Follow Gamble Sands online at gamblesands.com.

Mike Maltais:
360-333-8483 or
michael@ward.media



COURTESY OF GAMBLE SANDS
The 14-hole Quicksands course sits east of the Danny Boy Grill.



COURTESY OF GAMBLE SANDS
The view looking west from the lodging is panoramic.

Quick Read

The Barn, a new addition to the Gamble Sands golf, dining, and lodging complex near Brewster, has officially opened, offering a fresh dining and social venue with craft pizzas, cold draft beers, and classic American fare. This launch is part of a broader development plan that includes a new 18-hole golf course and expanded lodging facilities, aiming to nearly double the resort's size by summer 2025. Since its 2014 opening, Gamble Sands has earned high praise, including being named the best new golf course by several publications. The resort's design by David McLay Kidd emphasizes natural beauty and the game's pure essence, set amidst panoramic views of the Cascade Mountains and Columbia River. This expansion builds upon the vision of landowners, the Gebbers Family, and their collaboration with OB Sports Golf Management to create a world-class golf destination within their extensive orchards.

MEMBER MESSENGER

“Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business”

APRIL 2024 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 1



MD PHOTOGRAPHY, OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE 2023 HOME TOUR



The 2024 Home Tour & Remodeling Expo is coming this September!

Get ready to be inspired by the fusion of innovation and luxury at the much-anticipated 2024 Home Tour & Remodeling Expo, proudly presented by Banner Bank and Building NCW.

This exceptional event promises to showcase the

finest in-home design, remodeling, and construction.

Whether you're seeking ideas for your dream home or contemplating a renovation project, the Home Tour offers a wealth of inspiration and insights.

This year Building NCW

is celebrating 30 years of the Home Tour & Remodeling Expo, we promise to be bigger, bolder, and more exciting than ever before!

For more information on tickets please visit www.buildingncw.org or follow us on social media

for updates and exclusive behind-the-scenes content!

Let's celebrate 30 years of excellence together during the 2024 Home Tour & Remodeling Expo coming this September!

If you're interested in joining the 30th Annual

Home Tour & Remodeling Expo as a featured Builder, we would love to hear from you!

Please reach out to

Danielle directly either via email at danielle@buildingncw.org or call Building NCW offices at 509-293-5840



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PAGE 2

Welcome Back: From Shambles to Chic!

It's good to have you back! We left off with my bathroom in shambles. No floor, no toilet, no paint, no door, and no idea where to go. We were just two people staring at a floor, or lack thereof, wondering where our little project of "painting a wall" ended up with our only bathroom being stripped of its main components.



Morgan Dobbins

Missing the main components of a bathroom.

We needed a plan.

Google here we come! We did some research and tested parts of our floor to see if the damage was recent. It wasn't soft, which was a good sign! The floor was treated to kill any possible residual mold or mildew molecules left. I also grabbed Kilz Mold and Mildew and took an extra step to cover all the spots that were stained with water damage. Letting that dry, we once again headed to Lowe's.

We decided on the flooring we wanted and took it home to immediately start laying it down. Getting halfway through, we decided to bring our lawn ornament, also known as our toilet, inside and back to its rightful place. My teammate in all of this finished the floor and decided that with a floor and a working toilet, we needed to prioritize installing a door next. Skipping Lowe's this time and going directly downstairs where everyone keeps their spare door and their box of new door handles, we gathered what we needed and began the long trek upstairs. We measured the door opening, cut the bottom of the door frame to fit, and slid the door in. After securing it, my husband added the door handle, and our bathroom was back



Morgan Dobbins

Bathroom Transformation.

to where we thought the original project would be.

We took a moment to chat about other possibilities of what we could do in our bathroom, might as well talk about it before we put our bathroom the rest of the way back together. One option was adding a frosted window, but we didn't want to go the route of a building permit, nor did we want to drag out our project any longer. I called Travis Turner at Community Glass and asked about other possibilities for light, and he said for my situation a solar tube would be the best option. Low chance of leaking and cost-effective considering other options. It is installed like a roof vent and brings both sun and moonlight in. No permit would be needed since the home structure wouldn't be changing. Mr. Turner gave me the rundown and Community Glass has everything we would need. My husband is delighted to know it has been added to the honey-do list in the future. Solar tubes are a great way to bring light into a room that doesn't have



Google Images

Solar Tube option.

natural light. If you're like me and enjoy hoarding indoor plants around the home, it would be a great option to add to a bathroom with no natural light.

Back to business: Hubster double-checked the measurements for the wall to add the boards and we happened upon a website, through a text from my mom, that helps with the spacing for an accent wall. Once we triple-checked the numbers to make sure we were happy with them for our wall, we marked them on the wall with painter's tape. FINALLY, we were ready to paint! This whole project started because we wanted to change this wall.

Low and behold we started throwing paint on a wall. Once the first coat dried, we secured the boards on the wall and touched up the paint. After the help of a couple diet cokes, the second coat of paint was done and dried. Next, we hung up our new mirror, towel hooks, and hand towel holder. Our room was really starting to come together!



Morgan Dobbins

Finally the paint.

During February's Building NCW Home Show, we talked to Mitch Trochmann with Moonlight Stone Works. After talking to him about our project, we decided to finish the look of the bathroom by replacing the vanity top. We stopped by their store front a few weeks later and picked out a stone remnant we liked and a sink as well. They keep remnant options in stock for smaller projects like vanities, shower accessories, hearths, etc. Moonlight Stone Works then made an appointment to visit our home to get the exact measurements from the bathroom and started on the slab.

While Mitch and his team did their

portion, me and mine once again rolled up our sleeves and got to work on yet another detour to the finish line. Our job was to sand our vanity down and prepare it to be painted the same green as the wall. We only had three "big" things left on our to-do list:

- a new light fixture
- a new countertop
- a second coat on the bathroom vanity

There are some things in a project some DIY people, like myself, don't quite consider when starting a project. There's the goal of what is wanted and then what we can do with the existing infrastructure. This project has been a roller coaster of live, learn, and Lowes trips. Doing a DIY project is fun, and frustrating, and for us was financially



Morgan Dobbins

Nearly done! Check Building NCW Socials for updates!

required but for those who can swing it, hiring a contractor might be a better idea. Someone who can knock it out faster than two people who would be adding this on top of their workday and when they don't know where to go, result to Google. A contractor who is licensed and bonded is someone who can finish a job quicker and with their years of experience and honed talent have it done well. This could be the difference between three weeks of work and three months.

Keep an eye out on the Building NCW Facebook page and Instagram for the final picture of the countertop and bathroom. Thank you for tagging along in real-time with our trials and tribulations as well as our small victories and successes and check out the directory on buildingncw.org for licensed and bonded businesses for your homeownership needs.

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PAGE 3



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SEARCHING FOR BUILDERS
For the 2024 Home Tour coming this September!

Are you a skilled home builder eager to showcase your craftsmanship and expertise to a captivated audience? We're inviting you to be part of the 30th annual Home Tour and Remodeling Event!

Building NCW is
SEARCHING FOR CHEFS
For the 2024 Home Tour coming this September!

Are you a talented local chef looking to showcase your culinary skills and delight taste buds? We're seeking passionate chefs to participate in the 10th annual Chefs on Tour Event! The Chefs on Tour Event celebrates the diverse culinary talents of our local community. This year marks our 10th anniversary, promising an unforgettable experience for attendees and participants alike. Join us in highlighting the flavors and creativity that make our region unique!

Building NCW is
SEARCHING FOR VOLUNTEERS
For the 2024 Home Tour coming this September!

If you're interested in volunteering for the Home Tour 2024, please reach out to Building NCW Offices. We welcome volunteers of all backgrounds and experiences! Don't miss this opportunity to contribute to an exciting event and make a difference in our community. Sign up today and be a part of something special!

RRP Lead Class
OCTOBER 7th AT BNCW OFFICES

This class is a full day training taught by N.I.C.A Training. The course covers new regulations by the EPA for renovating, repairing or painting a home built before 1978. Businesses that are involved with Home Improvement and Renovations, Remodelers, Painters, Plumbers, Electricians, Maintenance Personnel, Property Managers.

Space is limited Pre-Registration is required

DANIELLE MARTIN
MORGAN DOBBINS

✉ Danielle@BuildingNCW.org
✉ Morgan@BuildingNCW.org
☎ 509-293-5840

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As a valued BNCW member company, you're welcome to utilize the BNCW conference room if you require a place to meet with clients or prospective clients, or simply need access to a meeting room. The room will seat up to 16 people comfortably, has wireless internet access and other amenities.

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PAGE 4

Springtime is Here!

As wintertime is ending, we recognize that spring is here. With the warmth of the sunshine, construction sites are coming alive with renewed vigor.

However, the sweet smell of flowers brings its own set of safety challenges for construction crews. From unpredictable weather patterns to potential hazards, it's crucial to prioritize safety measures on sites during this season.

Here are a few categories of safety to be aware of this spring,

Weather Awareness

Spring in the valley is a wonderful time but it can be erratic with weather.

With sudden showers, gusty winds, and fluctuating temperatures.

Workers should be equipped with appropriate gear and equipment for different temperatures and sudden rains.

Ground Conditions

The warmer weather conditions coupled with sudden showers mean the ground can be left unstable due to saturated grounds.

Muddy worksites can mean risks such as slips, trips, and falls can happen more frequently.

Good safety measures would include installing temporary walkways with traction mats or ensuring

proper drainage systems to prevent pooling water.

Another tip would be to provide adequate signage to let employees know of a hazard on the worksite.

Equipment Maintenance

After the long winter months, construction equipment may require a thorough inspection and maintenance to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Check machinery that has been sitting for any signs of damage or wear that could be caused by cold weather conditions.

Lubricate moving parts, replace worn-out components, and test features such as brakes and emer-

gency shut-off switches.

A great option to include in your safety plan that talks about proper equipment usage and emphasizes the importance of regular maintenance checks.

As construction sites ramp up with beautiful weather, safety should remain paramount on every worksite.

By addressing weather-related risks, maintaining awareness of ground conditions, and maintaining equipment on job sites.

These safety measures not only protect the well-being of workers but also help with a successful business and completion of projects!



STOCK PHOTO

Upcoming Events

APRIL

APRIL 9TH - COFFEE & COMMERCE LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP

APRIL 15TH - CPR TRAINING

APRIL 17TH - BOARD MEETING

MAY

MAY 15TH - BOARD MEETING

MAY 20TH - CPR TRAINING

MAY 21ST - NETWORKING NIGHT HOSTED BY PEOPLE'S BANK

MAY 27TH - MEMORIAL DAY

JUNE

JUN. 21ST - ANNUAL SUMMER GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUN. 26TH - BOARD MEETING

2024

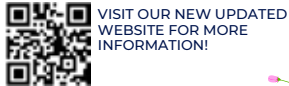
SEPT. 19TH - 10TH ANNUAL CHEFS ON TOUR

SEPT. 20TH

SEPT. 21ST - HOME TOUR - 30TH ANNUAL

SEPT. 22ND

OCT. 7TH - RRP LEAD CLASS



VISIT OUR NEW UPDATED WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION!



\$5

Road Apple Roulette is a raffle where people wager during the Annual Apple Blossom Parade. Horses will leave their "Road Apples" in five marked zones. You can chose which zones and win!

Road Apple Roulette

Rotary
Wenatchee Sunrise

Apple Blossom Parade May 5th

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Building North Central Washington is a nonprofit trade association dedicated to promoting and protecting the North Central Washington building industry for the preservation and growth of the local economy, small business and quality of life.

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NORTH CENTRAL HOME BUILDERS ASSN.

LOCATED AT:
2201 N. Wenatchee Ave.
Wenatchee, WA 98801

PHONE: (509) 293-5840

Email us for more information:
Info@BuildingNCW.org

Visit us online at:
www.BuildingNCW.org

Real Estate

Top Properties Douglas County February 2024

Residential

Sale Price	Address	Total Acres	Year Built	Residential Area	Basement Area	Bedr.	Bathr.	Garage Area
\$1,029,000	2908 N BRECKENRIDGE DR	0.31	2021	2468	2468	4	4.5	812
\$784,950	613 S PERRY AVE	0.23	2023	2684		4	2	720
\$690,000	154 S MEADOWBROOK LN	0.23	2007	2001	1504	4	3.5	435
\$650,000	1434 COPPER LOOP	0.19	2013	2109		4	2.5	575
\$625,000	100 19TH ST NE	0.15	2003	1740	1621	3	2.5	576
\$600,000	2421 3RD ST NE	1.06	1971	1524	1416	4	1.5	576
\$590,000	401 19TH ST NE #3	0	1993	1501	1478	2	2.5	584
\$565,000	2259 BRINLEY CT	0.24	2023	1674		3	2	520
\$560,000	500 ROCK ISLAND RD	0.38	1938	1200	600	4	2	
\$537,500	201 E ENTIAT DR	0.14	1994	1108		3	1.5	
\$519,000	2212 S MYSTICAL LOOP	0.18	2020	1873		3	2	620
\$480,000	1297 CANYON CT	0.24	2006	1316		3	2	506
\$410,000	1352 EASTMONT AVE #18	0	1991	2160		3	2	624
\$389,000	28 FRENCH AVE	0.12	1947	1224	200	3	2	

Commercial

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	DOR CODE	Acres
STATE OF WASHINGTON	BLUE HERON ORCHARD LLC	\$398,000	45 - TRANSPORTATION - HIGHWAY	0
STATE OF WASHINGTON	BLUE HERON ORCHARD LLC	\$390,500	45 - TRANSPORTATION - HIGHWAY	0
STATE OF WASHINGTON	MORALEZ VEGA, SALVADOR & HERMILIA MORALEZ SANCHEZ	\$177,000	45 - TRANSPORTATION - HIGHWAY	0
ORONDO GRANGE #1015	ORONDO SCHOOL DISTRICT #13	\$25,000	72 - RECREATIONAL - PUBLIC ASSEMBLY	0.5

Farm

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
DOUBLE D VINEYARDS LLC	ROSENBERGER, AARON & CHARMAINE	\$225,000		16.93
ERNSBERGER, THOMAS W & KRISTI M	CAVADINI, DANIEL D	\$210,000		472.8
STOCKING, CATHERINE A	VON GOEDERT, PAUL C.	\$38,220		40
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF	DOUGLAS COUNTY TLS	\$34,578	GRANT RD	18.03
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF	DOUGLAS COUNTY TLS	\$15,448	GRANT RD	18.03
TROUTMAN LAND LLC	DOUGLAS COUNTY	\$500		116
INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF	DOUGLAS COUNTY TLS	\$454	GRANT RD	18.03

Marketing Matters

AMY YALEY
COO of Ward Media



Partnering for Success in OTT Advertising

As a business owner in North Central Washington and a regular reader of my column, you understand the importance of reaching your target audience through effective marketing channels. Last month, we discussed digital marketing strategies to raise brand visibility and engagement. In this article, we will discuss OTT (Over-the-Top) advertising, also known as Programmatic Streaming TV ads.



STOCK PHOTO

OTT delivers high-quality video ads that play before, during, or after premium, TV-quality on-demand shows or live content. Think of TV ads but for digital, streamed TV. Video is a powerful tactic that brings awareness and credibility to a brand and connects with consumers who are increasingly cutting the cord and embracing streaming services.

OTT advertising can be daunting, especially for businesses with limited resources. OTT content is generally between 15-30 seconds in length and can be effectively accomplished by using still images and/or video content. This is where partnering with the right media agency can make all the difference.

OTT allows you to leverage user behavior and preferences to deliver personalized video content and advertisements directly to viewers (aka your customers) through the internet, bypassing traditional distribution methods. Streaming TV ads can serve to the viewer across all devices: Smart TVs, plug-in pucks, sticks, gaming consoles, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices.

OTT advertising is one of the strongest top-of-the-funnel tactics out there based on the sheer volume of views you can achieve. Streaming TV ads allow the advertiser to target audiences in a variety of ways, from location to demographics, behavior, and targeting users who have previously visited your website. This targeted approach is cost-effective because your message is delivered to the viewers who are most interested in your brand.

Navigating the complexities of OTT advertising can be both impactful and cost-effective. They should provide insights into the most effective ad formats, creative best

practices, and messaging that resonates with your target audience. Executing a successful campaign requires expertise and experience. A good media partner can guide you through the entire process, from strategy development to campaign optimization, ensuring your marketing dollars are well-spent and your business goals are achieved. They will handle tasks such as platform selection, ad placement, and campaign optimization based on criteria you've decided in your strategy

development. While OTT advertising can be a powerful tactic on its own, it's often more effective when combined with other digital marketing channels, such as social media, search engine marketing, and email campaigns. A skilled media partner can help you develop an integrated marketing strategy that leverages the strengths of each channel, creating a cohesive and well-rounded approach.

Pioneer Title Company promotes Courtney Mitchell to Vice President of Operations

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Pioneer Title Company has announced the promotion of Courtney Mitchell to the role of Vice President of Operations.

In this new position, Mitchell will oversee major decisions and operations across the company while continuing to serve as an escrow officer and manage her closing team.

According to Brian Fair, Owner of Pioneer Title Company, Mitchell's man-

agement and leadership capabilities were immediately apparent, making her promotion a straightforward choice.

"Courtney's management and leadership skills emerged immediately, which made this a slam dunk decision," Fair stated.

While her primary responsibilities will remain in escrow and closing operations, Mitchell is expected to play a key role in guiding the company's



Courtney Mitchell

direction and maintaining its position in the real estate services industry for years to come.

dia agency can be the key to unlocking the full potential of OTT advertising for your small business. By leveraging their expertise, strategic guidance, and industry connections, you can effectively reach your target audience, drive meaningful results, and stay ahead of the competition.

Amy Yaley is the COO of Ward Media and the co-owner of Apple Capital Marketing & Northwest Swag Works. She can be reached at amy@ward.media.

The promotion recognizes Mitchell's hard work, dedication to Pioneer Title's staff and clients, and overall contributions to the company's success.

Fair praised Mitchell's skillset, adding, "Courtney will be a key player in the real estate services industry for decades to come."

Pioneer Title expressed its sincere appreciation for Mitchell's talents and highlighted the promotion as a well-deserved achievement reflecting her exceptional performance.

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Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County February 2024

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
JBS GROUP LLC	PAC NOR LODGING LLC ETAL	\$6,600,000	1017 N WENATCHEE AVE	WENATCHEE	54582	1956			0	N	N
LAKE CHELAN RT LLC	HARLE ELOISE TRUSTEE	\$3,250,000	2120 W TERRACE AVE	CHELAN	1232	1904	3	1	966	N	N
THREE T INVESTMENTS LLC	WATERFRONT PROPERTIES LLC	\$2,780,000	525 PIERE ST	WENATCHEE	19000	1977			0	N	N
WHITE WATER LODGE VACATIONS LLC	CHARBONEAU KEITH T	\$1,975,000	8920 ICICLE RD	LEAVENWORTH	3356	2010	4	6.5	550	N	N
5DEEPWATER LLC	3-CAN LLC	\$1,700,000	220 BRIMSTONE LN	CHELAN	1369	2005	4	3.5	0	N	Y
BOLTON JAMES & KRISSA LIVING TRUST	PRINSLOO DORETTE	\$1,204,500	75 LOOKOUT RIDGE LN	MANSON	2757	2005	3	1.5	553	N	Y
ETV LLC	WENATCHEE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER	\$1,050,000	615 N EMERSON AVE	WENATCHEE	5590	1987			0	N	N
DALBECK ERIC & ABBY	DOLSTAD JAMES M & MELISSA M	\$950,000	247 BURCH HOLLOW LN	WENATCHEE	2452	2023	4	3	807	N	Y
SKVORTSOV EVGENY & SKVORTSOVA NATALIA	BRAMELD COLOCCI LIVING TRUST	\$935,000	12120 TITUS RD	LEAVENWORTH	1609	2000	3	1.75	506	N	N
ALTARAS EZRA J & MORALES VIRGINIA N	PUGET SOUND QUALITY CONSTRUCTION INC	\$900,000	23 ABE LN	MANSON	2808	2023	4	3	552	N	N
AHLUWALIA AMITH & RARAMA MARJORIE A	MOTT KYLE D & MORGAN L	\$892,500	2059 BROADCREST CT	WENATCHEE	3541	2007	4	4	914	N	Y
MAXFIELD RYAN & KIMBERLY	DALBECK ERIC & ABBY	\$879,000	1919 LOWER MONITOR RD	WENATCHEE	2876	2004	4	2.5	900	N	Y
NEMAYIAN MERRYLN B ETAL	DRY GULLY HOLDINGS LLC	\$830,000	2557 CORDELL ST	WENATCHEE	3816	2005	5	4	720	N	N
OLLER ANNETTE	MARABLE GEORGE & DAUNE FAMILY TRUST	\$785,000	213 PINNACLE PL	CHELAN	1224	1995	2	2.5	0	N	Y
KNAPPERT KENNETH & ANN MARIE	GRAHAM ROBIN P & SUSAN M	\$743,000	65 SARAH DR	WENATCHEE	2024	2016	3	2.5	828	N	N
FERRICK JESSICA ETAL	GAVIN JAMES M & LINDA M	\$722,000	18 HUMMINGBIRD HILL LN	MALAGA	2016	2020	3	3	1600	N	N
PILGERAM TORY & CHRISTINA	PIKE CYNTHIA	\$665,000	3327 CRESTVIEW RD	WENATCHEE	2220	1918	6	3	528	Y	Y
ROBINSON LAURA L & LUCID MICHAEL K	BEKKER GUSTAV W	\$655,000	1704 SKYLINE DR	WENATCHEE	2020	1991	4	2.5	560	N	N
INIGUEZ MARIA & RICARDO	LAKE CHELAN SENIOR HOUSING	\$650,000	2118 SAGE GROUSE RD	WENATCHEE	2104	2011	3	2	764	N	Y
KANE MICHAEL J & CHERYL	DOMSER TRAVIS & KARLA NORDSTROM-DOMSER	\$625,000	2320 W PROSPECT ST	CHELAN	1448	1968	5	3	0	N	Y
MERCHANT THEODORE & KRISTEN	DUGGER ELLIS & EVELYN ETAL	\$614,000	521 CEDAR WOOD LN	WENATCHEE	2510	2004	3	2.5	620	N	N
KHURANA RAHUL & SWATI ETAL	RAMACHANDRAN LAKSHMI N & SATHYANARAYANAN AARTHI	\$612,000	525 ALPINE PL	LEAVENWORTH	958	0			0	N	N
VENKATESAN KARTHICK & PANDIAN PRIYADARSHINI	STANSFIELD MARK G	\$600,000	480 ALPINE PL	LEAVENWORTH	958	0			0	N	N
DENHAM JOSEPH D	BALDOCK STEPHEN J & JANE E	\$585,000	187 PERSHING CIR	WENATCHEE	1655	2021	2	2	483	N	N
MAGUIRE LAURA & SHELDON SHANE A	TROBRIDGE JEAN L	\$577,500	617 MEADOWS DR	WENATCHEE	2091	1994	3	1.75	528	N	Y
WESTLUND JOSHUA & MICHELLE	K SQUARE INVESTMENTS LLC	\$555,865	824 MAJESTIC VIEW DR	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
SIMS KELLY LLC	SHANNON FAMILY TRUST	\$550,000	313 OLIVE ST	CASHMERE	1317	1955	3	1.75	660	N	Y
PETTER JESSICA & SECRETANT LUDOVIC	WU STEPHEN W	\$535,000	140 HENDERSON TER	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
WAUGH MAXIMILIAN D & JENNIFER	FLORIO JAMES & LISA LIVING TRUST	\$530,000	545 JUNCTION LN	LEAVENWORTH	781	0			0	N	N
STEPANOV VYACHESLAV & LILIYA	LESLIE JOHN W	\$528,500	7500 NAVARRE COULEE RD	CHELAN	2640	1980	3	2	480	N	N
LEWCHUK CHRISTOPHER M & VERDUSCO ERICA L	CHOCOLA MYKEL & CESIA	\$513,400	44 JAMEY LN	MALAGA	2293	2020	3	2	528	N	N
SMITH PETER E & AMANDA J	ELEMENT HOMES LLC	\$503,000	3125 CONARTY RD	MALAGA	2440	1984	5	2	484	N	Y
NOVOHILL PARTNERS LLC	LANGE RICHARD & LORI	\$500,000	1509 SENECA PL	WENATCHEE	1854	2004	3	2.5	594	N	Y
WRZESINSKI JEREMY J & STEFANE R	TRAN HUNG N & NGOC T NGUYEN	\$499,000	1359 UTAH CT	WENATCHEE	1662	1992	3	2.5	490	N	Y
KORSGAARD MATTHEW	IRVINE AARON K & CHLOE A	\$497,000	215 N GARFIELD AVE	WENATCHEE	1170	1948	3	2.5	0	N	Y
CITY OF WENATCHEE	CHELAN-DOUGLAS LAND TRUST	\$495,000	UNASSIGNED	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
LUCATERO LOPEZ MARISOL & JUANA C	LYNAM PATRICK E	\$495,000	1308 LOVES CT	WENATCHEE	2454	1976	4	2.25	609	N	Y
HUPPERT MOLLIE REAL ESTATE LLC 401K PLAN	SANDOVAL PEDRO A	\$480,200	206 N EMERSON AVE	WENATCHEE	1550	1928	5	2	360	N	Y
COLBERT KYLE & GAUL LINDSEY N	BENTZ TIMOTHY L & KAREN FAY	\$478,000	1331 LOVES CT	WENATCHEE	1176	1976	4	2	0	N	Y
NORWACK LAUREN R & JOHN A	COOPER JOSHUA C & MAGGIE E	\$469,900	1714 MAPLE ST	WENATCHEE	1960	1979			1080	N	N
WAGNER JOSHUA G & EMILY J	GRIFFITH SEAN T & CHARMAINE VECINO	\$469,000	801 ORONDO AVE	WENATCHEE	1403	1947	3	3	216	N	Y
STARKEY JACQUELINE D	MERRILL MICHAEL & ENDICOTT PATRICIA	\$460,750	1700 TERREA CT	WENATCHEE	1611	1997	3	1.75	400	N	N
PICCIOTTOLI MICHAEL L & KATHRYN G	KUNZ CANDACE L	\$455,000	500 RAMONA AVE	WENATCHEE	1920	1928	5	2	0	N	Y
COX EARLYNE	SPRINGER JOHN & MEGAN	\$449,900	104 QUAIL LN	CASHMERE	1714	0			0	N	N
KHIDIR KASIMLO & OSMAN MAGDALENA	HOWE SARAH E & KATHLEEN R	\$437,500	2220 W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	1054	0			0	N	N
KIM JUSTIN M & TERRAH J	BOYLE BRIAN L & LISA	\$435,000	103 PROSPECT ST	LEAVENWORTH	940	0			0	N	N
JACOBS AARON J & NICOLE S	WEILER TRISHA	\$415,000	203 VALLEY ST	CASHMERE	1598	1961	5	2.5	0	N	Y
GALLAHER KATHERINE A & JAMES E III	MONTGOMERY MICHAEL R	\$410,000	805 KRISTI CT	WENATCHEE	1440	1986	2	1	432	N	N
AGARWAL SAKET & POOJA	OPEN RHODES LLC	\$400,000	2220 W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	884	0			0	N	N
O BRIEN ADAM & JADE	KNIGHT THEODORE & JESSE	\$399,900	18138 SUNLAND DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	500	1971	2	1	0	N	Y
ELIAS NANCY & CASTRO NANCY	SMITH SUSAN ETAL	\$399,200	3065 RIVIERA BLVD	MALAGA	988	1992	3	1	312	N	N
FOX IAN & PETERSON HAILEY	MERCHANT THEODORE W & KRISTEN S	\$398,900	1308 CASCADE ST	WENATCHEE	1680	1986	2	2	0	N	N
CORTES HURTADO MA V ETAL	COMBS KENNETH	\$395,000	1603 ALDERWOOD DR	WENATCHEE	1215	1993	3	2	389	N	Y
LONG TANNER	DRAKE JAMES L	\$391,500	701 STEWART ST	WENATCHEE	960	1975	2	1.75	576	N	Y

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
PEREZ IXTA SOCORRO & RUIZ BECERRIL JOSE	TRINIDAD MARGARITA P	\$389,500	1029 COLUMBINE ST	WENATCHEE	753	1931	3	1	0	N	N
GOLDEN HANNAH E & MICHAEL A	MANGOLD JANET L	\$380,000	405 PIONEER DR	WENATCHEE	1472	1952	5	1.75	192	N	N
THOMPSON MATT & CRYSTAL	THOMAS LINDA	\$377,500	1705 CASTLEROCK AVE	WENATCHEE	1125	1964	3	1.5	550	N	N
PICAZO OMAR & BECERRIL SAILEN F	BURBANK KATHERINE ETAL	\$375,000	14918 BURKEY ST	ENTIAT	1360	1997	3	2	850	N	N
ASPEN GROVE SPRINGS LLC	RIVERSCENE INC	\$350,000	UNASSIGNED	PESHASTIN	0	0			0	N	N
BURRAGE JULIANNE & JAMES C	FILAN PAULA SUE	\$345,000	20795 KAHLER DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	1266	0			0	N	N
SARABIA CARLOS & REYES LOPEZ SARA	BRANSCUM JESSE W	\$340,000	8353 MAIN ST	PESHASTIN	1212	1943	3	1	352	N	Y
DIAS REY & DEL CARMEN FLORES MARIA	SANCHEZ RAUL & CARMEN SANCHEZ MARIA	\$330,000	926 MONITOR AVE	WENATCHEE	1292	1918	2	1	0	N	N
TOWNSEND KIMBERLY	KROGSTADT GERALDINE	\$329,000	1218 UTAH ST	WENATCHEE	756	1952	2	1	0	N	N
HAMPSON FAMILY TRUST	HAMPSON ANNIE TRUSTEE	\$311,200	1047 CHERRY ST	WENATCHEE	1177	1926	3	2	320	N	N
AD CHELAN LLC	PUGET SOUND QUALITY CONSTRUCTION INC	\$300,000	315 ORCHARD VIEW DR	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
JANGAARD LARS L & LINDSEY M	GIBBS PROPERTIES LLC	\$290,000	16026 RIVER RD	PLAIN	672	1974			0	N	N
CIBICKI ALINA R & SELLERS BRYCE A	MELTON ANDREW P	\$267,000	8075 NAHAHUM CANYON RD	CASHMERE	0	0			0	N	N
O HANA TRUST	JOYA RUDY & BETHANY	\$195,000	15 ROBERT DAVIS LN	CASHMERE	0	0			0	N	N
VANGUARD DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC	MC LAUGHLIN CONSTRUCTION REMODEL DESIGN LLC	\$187,564	UNASSIGNED	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
EN INVESTMENTS LLC	MORSE GARY	\$160,000	539 MALAGA AVE	WENATCHEE	820	1920	2	1	0	N	Y
WIDMER DUSTIN	MC LAUGHLIN BRYAN & MISTIE	\$155,000	49 GOOD TERN LN	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
BROWDER ROCKY C & JENAESHA M I	JOHNSON JAN FAMILY TRUST	\$150,000	3450 WESTRIDGE PL	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
OLSEN SCOTT & TRACY	TOMPKINS TERRY	\$140,000	19095 GILL CREEK RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
GROENEWEG MARK & LISA	GROENEWEG MARK & LISA ETAL	\$135,000	284 GRIFFITH RANCH RD	MANSON	0	0			0	N	N
RIOS LORETO MARIO ETAL	NEWREZ LLC	\$130,000	416 WALKER AVE	WENATCHEE	1028	1918	3	1	0	N	N
BATES MICHELLE & KIRK	GRISMORE ANN M & DOUGLAS D	\$95,000	W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	450	2017			0	N	N
GIBBS RUSSELL R & AMANDA M	PARSONS CAROLE	\$83,000	UNASSIGNED	PESHASTIN	0	0			0	N	N
JEFFREY SPRING & JOSEPH M	WILCO LAND LLC	\$76,500	34311 S NASON RD	STEVENS PASS	0	0			0	N	N
ALEXANDER NICHOLAS & TESSLA	LIDSTROM JAMES & SHARON	\$45,000	22740 BROWN RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
NAVARRO FRANCISCO M & MORA BEATRIZ	SOPERANEZ VIVIANA	\$40,000	6125 HAY CANYON RD	CASHMERE	1296	1999			0	N	N
STEPANOV VYACHESLAV & LILIYA	LESLIE WARREN D	\$32,110	UNASSIGNED	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
DONOVAN JUDITH A	JENKINS DARLENE R	\$25,000	525 ALPINE PL	LEAVENWORTH	210	0			0	N	N
GJJ CHELAN LLC	RINGENBACH DARIN & JENNIFER	\$25,000	103 N PARK & WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N

U.S. new-home sales eased in February, suggesting uneven recovery

By **Michael Sasso** | Bloomberg

New-home sales in the US unexpectedly fell in February for the first time in three months, suggesting an uneven recovery for the housing market.

Purchases of new single-family homes decreased 0.3% to a 662,000 annual pace last month, government data showed Monday.

The median forecast of economists in a Bloomberg survey called for a rate of 677,000.

Despite the drop in February, the US housing market has shown signs of a sustained comeback as mortgage rates stabilize around 7% and builders offer various incentives amid a limited listings of previ-

ously owned properties. A solid job market has also powered orders growth at builders including KBHome and Lennar Corp., suggesting residential investment will contribute to economic growth.

“Buyers have largely adjusted to the rate environment and we are encouraged by the demand we’re seeing that the onset of the spring selling season,” Jeffrey Mezger, KBHome’s chief executive officer, said on the company’s recent earnings call.

The Commerce Department’s report also showed the median sales price of a new house decreased 7.6% from a year ago to \$400,500 in February.



NATHAN HOWARD/BLOOMBERG
Homes in Aldie, Va., on Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024.

The supply of new homes rose to 463,000 during the month, the highest since October 2022.

By region, purchases decreased in the Northeast and Midwest. They rose 3.7% in the South, the biggest region, while they increased in the West to the highest level since July.

While a lack of previously-owned homes for sale has been a boon to builders, it’s been a detriment to Realtors unable to find properties to list.

However, a report last week showing the strongest existing-home sales in a year last month and an uptick in inventory sug-

gested a nascent recovery in the resale market.

Construction Activity

Meanwhile, housing starts bounced back from a weak start to the year with the biggest gain since May. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s GDPNow forecast shows residential investment will contribute 0.35 percentage point to first-quarter gross domestic product.

That would mark the third straight quarter that housing has added to growth.

However, the number of new homes for sale that are already completed rose in February climbed to the highest since September 2010.

“The benign explana-

tion is that builders have ramped up in anticipation for a stellar spring selling season,” Stephen Stanley, chief economist at Santander US Capital Markets LLC, said in a note. “If not, builders could be forced to pull back on building activity later this year.”

New-home sales are seen as a more timely measurement than purchases of previously-owned homes, which are calculated when contracts close. However, the data are volatile.

The government report showed 90% confidence that the change in new-home sales ranged from a 16.5% decline to a 15.9% gain.

With assistance from Chris Middleton.



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Real Estate

Existing home sales vaulted 9.5% in February, largest monthly increase in a year

The housing market showed renewed strength last month as existing home sales posted their largest monthly gain in a year, according to the latest report from the National Association of Realtors. The sizable rebound signals buyers remain actively engaged in the market despite higher mortgage rates and home prices compared to a year ago.

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Total existing-home sales - including single-family homes, townhomes, condos and co-ops - vaulted 9.5% from January to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.38 million in February.

While still down 3.3% from February 2023's elevated pace, the sharp monthly increase was a welcome pivot after sales had been trading water in recent months.

"Additional housing supply is helping to satisfy market demand," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun.

"Housing demand has been on a steady rise due to population and job growth, though the actual timing of purchases will be determined by prevailing mortgage rates and wider inventory choices."

The median existing-home sales price spiked 5.7% on an annual basis

to \$384,500 in February, marking eight consecutive months of year-over-year price increases nationally. Prices rose across all four major U.S. regions, with the Northeast and West posting some of the highest appreciation rates.

In the Northeast, the median price soared 11.5% from the prior year to \$420,600, while in the West it jumped 9.1% to \$593,000 - the highest regional median price.

While representing substantial equity gains for existing homeowners, the relentless price growth is further squeezing affordability for many prospective buyers.

Total housing inventory increased 5.9% from January to 1.07 million units by the end of February. However, that still amounted to just 2.9 months' supply nationally at the current monthly sales pace, down from 3.0 months in Janu-

ary and well below the 6 months considered a balanced market.

Properties typically stayed on the market for 38 days last month, up modestly from 36 days in January and 34 days a year earlier, according to NAR's monthly Realtors Confidence Index survey.

"Due to inventory constraints, the Northeast was the regional underperformer in February home sales but the best performer in home prices," Yun added. "More supply is clearly needed to help stabilize home prices and get



STOCK PHOTO

of the Library, let me know that Amy was retiring. So I just kept my eyes out, and when I saw the position open, tried to grab it as soon as I could. I was so excited, and they hired me. One of my friends is just like, 'What are the chances in our tiny town that you would actually get to be the librarian?'" said Kwon.

The opportunity felt serendipitous, and for Kwon, it was a way to reignite her lifelong passion. Kwon described herself as a shy, introverted child, who read voraciously.

As the child of immigrants, Kwon said books helped her learn about the world, about America, and how to exist in it.

"Books practically raised me," said Kwon.

After college, Kwon landed a job with Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

(AALDEF) in New York, educating people on their rights and how to access community resources.

"So much of the work they were doing was about equal access to information... After 9/11 when there was a lot of money being poured into downtown to rebuild, a lot of the Chinatown businesses didn't get a piece of that because they just didn't know. They didn't know those were there, they didn't know how to navigate the system, they didn't know if there were translated materials," said Kwon.

For so much of her childhood, Kwon consumed information for her own enrichment and enjoyment.

Yet her work at AALDEF showed her that access to information was the cornerstone to equal rights,

prompting her to pursue a graduate degree in library studies.

"The public library is really that one democratic institution where it's meant to be for everyone, so that became really, really important for me," said Kwon.

"Libraries are actually pretty radical, you know? The principles of our profession are all about equal access to information and patrons' rights to read whatever they want. Our job is just to foster that and to be here for everyone and whatever they need," said Kwon.

Now, as the Leavenworth Librarian, Kwon plans to use her research experience to find the pockets of the community that may not know about the library or its resources, but may need them.

As outreach brings peo-

ple in, Kwon wants the library space to serve as the "community's living room," where kids and adults can gather, meet, and engage with each other.

Her biggest goal is to create a media/maker space for kids and teens to create and put things out in the world, such as podcasts, zines, or newspapers.

Through the NCW Libraries system, the Leavenworth Library is able to access over 600,000 items, such as books, digital media, mobile internet hotspots, museum passes and more.

again recently to 6.74% as of March 14th after briefly retreating earlier in the year. Rates remain elevated compared to just 6.60% a year ago.

Any sustained upward trajectory for sales will likely depend on a meaningful expansion in inventory of affordable homes for sale combined with mortgage rates steady around 6% or lower.

"The jump in February existing-home sales shows the housing market continues to be a bright spot in the broader economy," said Yun. "Additional housing supply gradually becoming available is helping to satisfy robust demand driven by demographic shifts and employment growth across most of the country."

Regional variations

The existing home sales market exhibited a varied regional performance in February, with the Northeast remaining stagnant, the Midwest and South experiencing solid gains, and the West witnessing a remarkable surge. This divergence in trends highlighted the intricate dynamics influencing housing demand across different geographical areas. The median home prices continued their upward trajectory nationwide, though the rate of appreciation varied considerably between regions, reflecting the unique supply and demand conditions prevailing in each market.

Northeast

At 480,000 units, existing home sales in the Northeast were identical to January but down 7.7% from February 2023. It's the fourth consecutive month that home sales in the Northeast registered 480,000 units. The median price in the Northeast

was \$420,600, up 11.5% from one year ago.

Midwest

In the Midwest, existing home sales propelled 8.4% from one month ago to an annual rate of 1.03 million in February, down 3.7% from the previous year. The median price in the Midwest was \$277,600, up 6.8% from February 2023.

South

Existing-home sales in the South leapt 9.8% from January to an annual rate of 2.02 million in February, down 2.9% from one year earlier. The median price in the South was \$354,200, up 4.1% from last year.

West

In the West, existing home sales skyrocketed 16.4% from a month ago to an annual rate of 850,000 in February, a decline of 1.2% from the prior year. The median price in the West was \$593,000, up 9.1% from February 2023.

KWON

Continued from page 5

lived in Leavenworth since 2020.

Kwon, her husband, and three kids relocated across the country in order to be closer to family.

When they moved, Kwon immediately fell in love with the small town, but knew job openings for a librarian would be slim to none.

In the meantime, she

continued part-time work lecturing and doing research for a tech company, as well as serving on the Mountain Sprouts Children's Community Board and Peshastin Dryden-Alpine Lakes PTO.

She focused on raising her three sons, but as her youngest entered school full-time, she started to consider full-time work again.

"Then, one of my neighbors, who is on the Friends

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Real Estate

Realtors' settlement could dramatically change cost of housing sales

By Julian Mark, Aaron Gregg, Rachel Kurzius | The Washington Post

The National Association of Realtors has agreed to settle litigation that accused the industry group of artificially inflating real estate commissions, setting up a reconfiguration of the housing market that could dramatically lower how much consumers pay in home transactions.

Under the proposed deal, the group representing 1.5 million real estate agents would change rules that plaintiffs and consumer advocates say have helped inflate commissions for home sellers, who for decades have paid Realtors 5 to 6 percent of the sale price. The association also would pay \$418 million over four years to settle several cases.

"Ultimately, continuing to litigate would have hurt members and their small businesses," said Nykia Wright, interim chief executive of NAR. "While there could be no perfect outcome, this agreement is the best outcome we could achieve in the circumstances." NAR said it continues to deny wrongdoing.

The rule changes have the strong potential to lower fees paid by sellers in home sales - and may even bring down home prices overall - by aligning fees closer to the true value of services from real estate agents, according to consumer advocates, academics and lawyers involved in the cases.

"There's no doubt in my mind that this is going to bring about tremendous savings to homeowners," said Michael Ketchmark, a plaintiff attorney representing Missouri home sellers in one of the cases, adding that he was confident that agreement would fundamentally change the real estate market and help lower the cost of housing and home sales.

Benjamin D. Brown, managing partner at Cohen Milstein, one of the firms representing the plaintiffs in the Illinois case, said the "settlement will bring sweeping reforms that will help countless American families."

The agreement still needs a federal judge's approval before it can take

effect. Some skeptics, such as Redfin CEO Glenn Kelman, questioned whether the agreement would significantly change the status quo.

The Justice Department, which last year asked a federal court to reopen its antitrust investigation into NAR's rules, declined to comment on the settlement.

The association's century-old commissions structure provides that sellers' and buyers' agents split an amount that typically ranges between 5 and 6 percent of the home sale price. Home sellers in Illinois and Missouri alleged in a pair of class-action lawsuits that NAR's rules inflate commissions by requiring sellers' agents to make a compensation offer to list on the Multiple Listing Service, a home selling database.

In October, a Kansas City, Mo., jury found that NAR and major brokerages conspired to keep commissions artificially high and awarded a class of Missouri home sellers \$1.8 billion in damages. Meanwhile, the case in Illinois had been moving toward a trial, focused on similar allegations. The agreement announced Friday, if approved by a judge, would resolve those cases and end the long-standing commissions structure, said Ketchmark, who represented the Missouri plaintiffs.

Since the October verdict, experts predicted that the commissions system was poised for change. Not only was it threatened by the class-action cases, but the Justice Department had been asking the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to reopen an antitrust investigation into NAR's commissions rules that it had settled in 2020.

Experts say the proposed rule changes will result in a "decoupling" of commissions that have been traditionally borne by the seller and shared with the buyer's agent - a system that critics say was anticompetitive and kept fees high.

The settlement unveiled Friday would bar seller agents from using multiple

listing services - Realtor-accessible databases where new homes are marketed - to post commissions they offer to buying agents. The option to denote buyer compensation will simply not appear in the multiple listing services, according to attorneys involved in the case.

If a federal court approves the settlement, the rules will take effect in July, according to a person close to the settlement talks who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

It's likely that agents representing buyers will now have to seek compensation directly from their clients because they will no longer get a guaranteed commission from the seller, according to Sonia Gilbukh, assistant professor at CUNY Baruch College.

That could make it harder for cash-strapped parties to buy a home, she said. But she added that commissions should decrease, attracting less-experienced Realtors and exerting downward pressure on prices. Sellers, Gilbukh said, probably will see lower transaction costs if they no longer pay buyers' commissions.

"It might take time for the industry to shake out into a new equilibrium," Gilbukh said. "But overall, the reduced transaction fees should bring the [home] prices down."

The new system would not necessarily hurt low- and lower-income buyers, said Jenny Schuetz, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution focused on housing. Closing costs such as buying down points or paying for title insurance get bundled into mortgage loans, and a buyer agent's fee could similarly be included. Plus, if sellers halve the fee they're paying to real estate agents, they might sell their home at a lower price because they keep more of the proceeds, Schuetz said.

"This doesn't have to be bad for low-income, first-time home buyers if we put in place supports so they understand how the process works, are empowered

Brian Fair

Owner and operator of Pioneer Title Company



Adjusting to higher rates: Wenatchee Valley's real estate resilience

In the face of climbing interest rates, the single-family home market in Chelan and Douglas counties, with a spotlight on the Wenatchee Valley, has showcased remarkable adaptability. A comparison of sales data from the early months of 2022 to the same timeframe in 2024 reveals a market that's navigated these financial shifts with a steady hand.

During January and February of 2022, as interest rates began their ascent from 3% to 4%, the market saw 114 homes change hands through financing, amounting to a total of \$66.8 million. Fast forward to 2024, and we find a nearly parallel scenario: 113 homes sold, totaling \$61 million in financed transactions. This near-constant in units sold, alongside an 8% dip in financed sales volume, signals a market that's not just surviving but stabilizing - even as the average 30-year mortgage rate hits 6.75%.

The deviation, particularly a \$5 million slack in sales, primarily stems from a downtick in homes selling for over \$1 million. A closer look at sales by price range unveils a nuanced landscape: financed sales of homes under \$250,000 have slightly retracted, while cash purchases in the \$250,000 to \$500,000

segment surged. The luxury sector, homes priced at \$750,000 and above, witnessed a significant retreat in financed buys, illustrating the pronounced effect on higher-end properties.

Nationally, the scenario is mixed. The National Association of Realtors noted a 9.5% month-over-month rise in existing home sales in February, counterbalanced by a 3.3% year-over-year decrease. Locally, however, the Chelan-Douglas single-family residential (SFR) market has outpaced national trends, marking a notable increase of 33% month-over-month and 43% in year-over-year sales, an emblem of robust market resilience.

Recent announcements by the Federal Reserve regarding interest rate cuts and adjustments to its balance sheet suggest potential for further stimulation of the real estate market. However, these measures also pose inflationary risks, especially

with increased government spending anticipated during an election year.

The Wenatchee market's dynamism isn't confined to single-family homes. Sales in land, commercial real estate, and condos have also seen an uptick, propelled by an increase in financed transactions across various price brackets. This broad-based market activity underlines a sustained demand across different sectors, buoyed by a noticeable rise in financed transactions across diverse price ranges.

In sum, despite the hurdles of higher interest rates, the Wenatchee Valley's real estate market continues to forge ahead, its strength in financed transactions a testament to enduring buyer confidence and overarching market stability.

Brian Fair owns and operates Pioneer Title Company in Wenatchee

to negotiate with brokers over this and understand going into it what they're getting," she said.

Steve Brobeck, a senior fellow with the Consumer Federation of America, which has long studied the commissions issue, agreed that the agreement has the potential to shake up the industry - and he said it's for the best.

"NAR has done the sensible thing and agreed to try to put this controversial issue behind them," he said.

Consumers "will be the big beneficiaries," said Brobeck, whose organization estimates that they will save \$30 billion per year.

Other analysts also expect large savings for consumers. An October report by investment firm Keefe, Bruyette & Woods predicted that changes to the commissions structure could lead to a 30

percent reduction in the \$100 billion annually that U.S. consumers pay in real estate commissions.

The settlement would set up two negotiations in the home sale process - one between the buyer and their agent, and another between the seller and their agent, Schuetz said.

"It's going to be really interesting to see, particularly on the buyer side, how much buyers are willing to pay in a fee to their broker to help them purchase a home, when before there was sort of this impression that buyers didn't pay a fee at all," Schuetz said.

In general, she said, people tend to be more sensitive to a tax or fee that is written out, rather than baked into the price. But buyers' needs vary widely, depending on their level of knowledge, the local market and the complexity of the transaction. Ideally,

Schuetz said, agents will offer fees that match their skill level and the actual services provided - what others have referred to as an "a la carte" model.

"I could see some buyer's agents marketing themselves as, 'We are a full-service agent, we help you do all the things, we make this easier for you, and we charge a higher fee,'" Schuetz said. "And other buyer's agents saying, 'Hey, we're working with buyers who don't need a ton of help. We're kind of cut-rate, we'll offer you a reasonably low fee.'"

Redfin's Kelman cheered the proposed settlement, but said in a blog post that "it's still unclear if the settlement will end cooperation entirely." The real estate listing platform has long been a critic of the commissions structure and has cast itself as an alternative to the NAR system.

Labor Area Reports

Wenatchee MSA job market surges, outpacing state

The Wenatchee metro area employment picture looked exceptionally bright in January, with total nonfarm jobs surging at more than four times the statewide pace, according to a new report by a state labor economist.

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

In his monthly labor area summary, Donald W. Meseck, Regional Labor Economist at the Employment Security Department, found that total nonfarm employment in the two-county Wenatchee metro area registered 49,400 jobs in January 2024, up a robust 6.2% or 2,900 jobs compared to January 2023.

This significantly outpaced the 1.4% year-over-year job growth rate across Washington state over the same period, with the Wenatchee area expanding at a faster clip

than the state for the past nine consecutive months.

"This divergence, with rapid local job growth versus more modest gains statewide, appears to be widening," Meseck wrote in his report.

Construction Boom Leads the Way

The booming construction industry led all sectors in year-over-year employment gains, adding 800 jobs for a 26.7% spike. This was aided by an uptick in home sales even as listings shrank and prices

cooled slightly.

While relatively high mortgage rates continued to weigh on construction hiring statewide, as that sector shed 4.1% of its workforce, the Wenatchee area housing market remained fairly resilient.

Meseck's report also highlighted robust 9.2% job growth in the local leisure and hospitality sector over the past year as hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues staffed up amid a rebound in tourism and business travel.

Professional services

firms and other industries also expanded payrolls at a healthy clip. However, local retailers trimmed 1.5% of their workforce, mirroring statewide losses in that sector.

Unemployment Rate Ticks Up

The fast pace of job creation did lead the Wenatchee metro area's unemployment rate to tick up to 6.4% in January from 6.1% a year earlier as more residents entered the labor force actively looking for work.

However, the area's 4.4% annual unemployment rate for 2023 still

marked the lowest level on record dating back to 1990, according to Meseck.

Agriculture's Influence Wanes

While the farm sector has long been the region's economic bedrock, Meseck's report signaled that agriculture's role in the local job market has gradually become less pronounced over the past decade.

From 2012 to 2022, agricultural employment plummeted by over 20% in Chelan County and nearly 25% in Douglas County amid automation, conversion of some seasonal farm jobs to year-round positions, and increased use of temporary H-2A labor from abroad.

As a result, agriculture's share of total employment in the two-county area fell

by nearly seven percentage points in Chelan County and 9.5 points in Douglas County over that span.

Outlook Uncertain

Looking ahead, Meseck cautioned that relatively high-interest rates could continue weighing on construction hiring across Washington state, though the resilient housing market may somewhat insulate the local industry.

More broadly, the labor economist wrote that economic crosscurrents and potential headwinds make the overall employment outlook uncertain in the coming months. But for now, Meseck's report depicts a Wenatchee metro area firmly in an upswing fueled by brisk hiring across several key industries outpacing statewide job growth.



STOCK PHOTO

Washington State faces higher labor underutilization than U.S. in 2023

According to new data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington State experienced significantly higher rates of labor underutilization compared to the national average in 2023. The broadest measure, known as U-6, stood at 8.1% in Washington, well above the 6.9% rate for the entire United States. This made Washington one of just a handful of states exceeding the national level on this metric.

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

The U-6 rate includes not only the officially unemployed based on the traditional definition, but also workers employed part-time for economic reasons and those marginally attached to the workforce.

While Washington's official unemployment rate was similar to the country as a whole, these broader measures revealed many more state residents facing employment challenges last year.

Using the official U-3 definition, there were an estimated 167,500 unemployed individuals in Washington in 2023, representing 4.1% of the labor

force, on par with national figures. However, the state had 119,900 additional workers classified as employed part-time involuntarily due to business conditions or an inability to find full-time roles.

Another 42,700 were marginally attached, meaning they wanted jobs but had not actively searched in the past month, including 11,200 discouraged workers.

Washington had the third-largest gap nationally between its U-5 and U-6 rates at 3.0 percentage points, reflecting a high degree of underemployment from part-time workers preferring full-time work.

Though five of the six measures did not differ statistically from 2022 levels, the consistently elevated rates compared to the U.S. suggest more state residents faced employment hurdles overall.

Only a few other states, like California and New Jersey, had similarly high readings across all six labor underutilization measures.

Over a dozen states exhibited rates significantly below national averages.

Continuing to track these measures is important for understanding the remaining slack in the job market beyond the standard unemployment rate as the economy evolves.

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A second season is all about second chances for Wenatchee Bighorns

For the Wenatchee Bighorns, persistence is everything. The professional basketball team had a rocky debut in 2023, losing half its leadership in April of last year, including Head Coach Don Sims's resignation over pay disputes.

By **TAYLOR CALDWELL** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

Yet, the Bighorns' second season means a second chance at success in the community. Less than a month before the first game of 2024, the team brought on new managing owner Shawn Coopriider and Head Coach JP Davis to pull together what is typically achieved over the course of six to nine months.

"This is our second chance, and it's with a group of people that are embracing that second chance and they want to make something of it. That to me is what makes it really cool," said Coopriider.

The Bighorns are part of the West Conference of The Basketball League, a men's professional basketball league with over 40 teams across the U.S. As Davis sees it, the league is a second chance for players who may have had life get in the way of their NBA dreams to still play professionally. They are used to working hard and proving themselves, and this season's symbolism is no different.

"I think basketball signifies life in a way. Those that work hard and that are consistent, are usually successful. You also have a number of different ways to be successful in basketball, whether it's the guy that can shoot threes, or whether it's the big tall seven-footer that's



COURTESY OF WENATCHEE BIGHORNS
Shawn Coopriider was announced managing owner in Feb. 2024, and will be working in partnership with CEO Anthony Williams.

blessed by God with the height...It's also a game of imperfections," said Davis.

Davis only had a few weeks before their first game to start training with his team. Yet the players are young, tough, and high-energy, which Davis sees as a good foundation for a strong team. As a professional coach, Davis is focused not only on building up the team's skills on the court but also in the community. He will train them to be professional athletes, how to navigate traveling for work, and how to be community leaders.

"A big thing for us is, basketball is the vehicle that is going to allow us to connect with the community. So yes, we're a basketball team or club,

but we're much more," said Davis.

While TBL makes professional basketball more accessible to players, it's also making professional athletes more accessible to youth. As Davis puts it, young basketball fans might not be able to afford an NBA game or meet LeBron James, but they will be able to meet Bighorns players after every game or even be taught how to play through Bighorns youth programs.

As Davis leads the team on the court, Coopriider has big plans to make the basketball team a sustainable business.

"We're tearing it back down. We're calling it a reboot. So we're rebooting year one. Essentially, this is year one of what I see

in my mind is a three year plan," said Coopriider.

Coopriider has local ties to the area, having grown up in Wenatchee, but he also has years of entrepreneurial experience. He sees the team as a startup; it is under-resourced and needs to be conscious about spending while finding creative ways to generate revenue in order to build a foundation.

"Year one, we're going to start with the basics, both financially and on the court, building a solid foundation, fundamentals around financial fiduciary as well as having a coach that can come in and really build a solid team, not just a few individuals," said Coopriider.

Similar to Davis, reengaging the community is the top priority. He's hopeful the business will be able to build up a financial foundation to form strong relationships with vendors, sponsors, and partners.

After building a foundation in the first year, Coopriider envisions establishing a more permanent home base for games and housing, bolstering its contributions to the community, and building up the fanbase. By year three, Coopriider hopes the team will have enough fanbase to establish a bigger venue, such as the Toyota Town Center.

If all goes to plan, the team hopes to step up its



COURTESY OF WENATCHEE BIGHORNS
Bighorns Head Coach JP Davis has over 20 years of basketball experience, playing and coaching professionally across 25 different countries.

ranking, open up to teams in Canada and Europe, and put Wenatchee on the map. Both Coopriider and Davis are hopeful that one day, the Bighorns will be a household name in the Valley for entertainment and community service.

More information about the Wenatchee Bighorns and their schedule can be found at wenatcheebighorns.com.

Taylor Caldwell:
509-433-7276 or
taylor@ward.media

Quick Read

The Wenatchee Bighorns basketball team eyes a fresh start in its second season after a tumultuous debut year marked by leadership upheavals, including the resignation of Head Coach Don Sims. With new Managing Owner Shawn Coopriider and Head Coach JP Davis at the helm, the team is rapidly preparing for the 2024 season, embodying a spirit of resilience and community engagement. The Bighorns, competing in The Basketball League's West Conference, aim to not only excel on the court but also to foster strong community connections through the sport. Coopriider's vision of rebuilding the team as a sustainable entity involves laying a solid foundation on and off the court, with an eye toward future growth and making professional basketball accessible to local youth.

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