

A PUBLICATION OF WARD MEDIA | ESTABLISHED IN 1987

# Lake Chelan Building Supply, where customers become friends

When it came time for Brett La Mar to hand over the reins to his family business, Lake Chelan Building and Supply, he wanted a buyer who would embody his parents' motto — where customers become friends.

By **QUINN PROPST** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

“I always thought that was the cheesiest line,” La Mar said. “I’m like, oh my gosh, you guys, we got to come up with something different, you know. But the more I sat there with them, and the more I became part of this community, I’m like, that’s perfect.”

Now under TAL Holdings, also known as TAL Building Centers, a family-owned business out of Vancouver, Wash., the company’s values remain intact.

TAL’s tagline, “Building Better Communities,” aligns closely with Lake Chelan Building Supply’s motto, “Where Customers Become Friends.”

Both emphasize a customer-first approach and a commitment to contributing to the community rather than only

prioritizing profit, La Mar said.

La Mar’s parents Edd and Sharon La Mar started Lake Chelan Building and Supply in 1979 in Manson.

They recognized the need for a building supply store as the valley was starting to expand and there was a lot of new construction.

Edd had worked at a local lumber yard in Chelan and had the potential to buy in and be a partner. However, at the last minute the lumber yard chose a different partner. Edd then used the money his father had left him to start his own lumberyard in Manson.

There wasn’t much to Manson at that time so people questioned the decision but it turned out to be a smart move. He bought an acre of horse pasture



COURTESY OF THE LA MAR FAMILY

Lake Chelan Building and Supply staff show off their “stud” horses.

and started the lumberyard.

The store had humble beginnings, interest rates were high so not a lot of people were building at the time. But things turned around fairly quickly and by the mid 80s they were an established business.

La Mar was 12 when they opened the store and he worked

there sweeping floors and stocking shelves.

In 1993, in a classic underdog story turn of events, Edd was approached by the new owner of the Chelan lumber yard that he tried to buy into in 1979. Their business was

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## Ballmer Group awards \$20 million in funding for Washington’s YMCA youth programs

Washington State Alliance of YMCAs was the recipient of a three-year contribution of over \$20 million from the Seattle-based Ballmer Group.

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

The Ballmer Group, founded by philanthropist Connie Ballmer and her husband Steve Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft, commits funding to leaders and organizations that have demonstrated the ability to implement initiatives that align with the group’s mission to improve economic mobility for children and fami-

lies in the United States.

The contribution to the Washington State Alliance of YMCAs will empower the YMCAs to significantly expand their programs for low-income youth aged five to 17 years old.

“This vital funding is an investment in the resilience and

See **BALLMER GROUP** Page 6

## Confluence Health adds new security dog



COURTESY OF CONFLUENCE HEALTH

Members of the Confluence Health security team pose with Atlas, a German Shepherd who recently joined the hospital’s new K9 security program. Atlas and his handler completed extensive training before beginning their duties.

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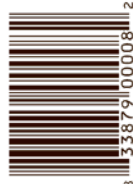
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**East Wenatchee**  
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**Cashmere**  
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130 Titchenal Way

**Leavenworth**  
Dan's Food Market  
1329 U.S. Highway 2

**Chelan**  
Safeway,  
106 W. Manson Rd.

**Lake Chelan Mirror**  
131 S. Apple Blossom Dr.,  
#109

**Brewster**  
Quik E Mart #2 (Exxon)  
26048 U.S. Highway 97

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# Community connections strengthen NCW's resilience

By Terry Ward | CEO and Publisher

This month's stories highlight how community connections are strengthening North Central Washington in profound and lasting ways.

From innovative security programs at Confluence Health to grassroots sustainability initiatives, we're seeing organizations and individuals work together to build a more resilient and interconnected region.

Confluence Health's new security dog program, featuring Atlas and his handler Justin Bennett, exemplifies how health-care facilities are evolving to enhance safety while fostering meaningful connections. Bennett's extensive background in high-security environments, combined with Atlas's specialized training, brings world-class expertise to our local healthcare system. This initiative, supported by the Confluence Health Foundation, shows how innovative approaches can both protect and unite our community members. The fact that over 900 staff members participated in naming Atlas demonstrates the program's ability to build bridges across the organization.

The expansion of Sustainable NCW's Bike CoOp through their "CoOp on the Go" program demonstrates our region's growing commitment to environmental justice and community empowerment. Their mobile repair program, funded by the Department of Ecology, will bring valuable skills and resources directly to underserved neighborhoods, making sustainable transportation more accessible to all. Van Brinkerhoff's journey from refurbishing abandoned bikes to helping establish this vital community resource shows how individual passion can catalyze systemic change.

Lake Chelan Building Supply's thoughtful transition to TAL Holdings preserves a 46-year legacy of community-first business practices while positioning the company for future growth. Brett La Mar's decision ensures this vital local institution maintains its founding principle – "where customers become friends" – while gaining resources to serve our growing region. The La Mar family's story, from humble beginnings in a Manson horse pasture to becoming a cornerstone of the Lake Chelan com-

munity, reminds us that successful businesses are built on relationships as much as transactions.

The achievements of our local students at the Environmental & Sustainability Literacy Summit showcase how the next generation is already leading positive change in our community. From Wenatchee High School's ambitious composting initiative to Beaver Valley Elementary's innovative wildlife studies, these young leaders are proving that meaningful innovation often starts at the grassroots level. Their presentations to state legislators demonstrate how local initiatives can influence policy and practice across Washington.

These stories paint a picture of a region where community connections drive progress and innovation. What's particularly striking is how each initiative builds upon existing relationships while forging new ones. The Bike CoOp partners with local schools, Lake Chelan Building Supply maintains its community focus through corporate transition, and our students connect local environmental action to state-level policy discussions.

# From the Publisher



The Ballmer Group's significant investment in our region's YMCA programs further reinforces this theme of connection and community support. Their \$20 million contribution will help expand vital youth programs, ensuring that economic barriers don't prevent any child from participating in activities that build character and community. The Wenatchee Valley YMCA's share of this funding will strengthen their teen outreach initiatives, supporting everything from gang prevention work to youth sports programs.

As we move through 2025, these examples remind us that our region's greatest strength lies in our ability to work together, adapt to change,

and support one another. Whether it's a security dog making hospital rounds, students leading environmental initiatives, or longtime business owners ensuring their legacy continues to serve the community, we're seeing how strong connections make North Central Washington not just a beautiful place to live, but a model for sustainable, community-driven progress.

*Terry Ward is the CEO of Ward Media and the publisher of NCW News, 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.*

# Lighting the Path for Cybersecurity Careers in North Central Washington

As technology and artificial intelligence continue to revolutionize industries, cybersecurity has emerged as an essential skill set for professionals across all sectors.

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

From agriculture and energy to health-care and hospitality, safeguarding digital infrastructure is no longer an optional consideration but a necessity.

This evolution is particularly important for rural communities, where the adoption of technology is transforming the way work is done for many industries and creating efficiencies, but also exposes businesses to potential cyber threats and introduces new vulnerabilities.

## The Rising Demand for Cybersecurity Skills

Whether it's securing supply chain data in agriculture, or safeguarding customer information in hospitality, every sector is reliant on robust cybersecurity measures.

In healthcare, rural hospitals, in particular, face unique challenges as cyberattacks can severely impact patient care and compromise private data. According to the Microsoft Cybersecurity Program

for Rural Hospitals, many rural healthcare facilities operate with limited resources, making them prime targets for cyber criminals.

Rural hospitals provide critical services to the communities they serve but cyberattacks have become a growing threat.

Microsoft is investing in collaborative efforts to provide self-assessments and resources to secure technology, and training for rural hospitals to ensure safe and efficient healthcare delivery.

Industry experts also report that the demand for skilled cybersecurity professionals is surging in other sectors.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has developed a comprehensive framework – the NIST Cybersecurity Framework – to guide organizations in managing cybersecurity risks.

This framework is widely regarded as the gold standard for identifying, protecting, detecting, responding to, and recovering from cyber threats.

## Local Efforts to Promote Cybersecurity Education

In North Central Washington, regional partners are taking proactive steps

to equip educators and counselors with the tools needed to guide students into cybersecurity careers.

The Apple STEM Network, North Central Educational Services District (NCESD), NCW Tech Alliance, and the Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (CCoE) are collaborating to host a workshop designed to inform and empower career counselors and academic advisors.

The Cybersecurity Career Advisor Workshop will take place on February 20 at the North Central Educational Services District in Wenatchee.

This free, four-hour event will introduce participants to a cybersecurity career toolkit, provide insights into job openings, and offer guidance on us-

# Finance

**Beau Ruff**

Contributor for Ward Media



## Remember lending basics before being lured by the promise of guaranteed interest

**H**ave you ever been given an opportunity to loan someone money at an attractive interest rate? Driven by the prospect of higher “guaranteed” returns, prospective lenders sometimes look to opportunities in their communities to provide loans to businesses or individuals.

Often, the prospective lender knows the borrower, or at least knows the intermediary who plans to facilitate the lending. Why is it that these potential loans appear to be so lucrative... and is the opportunity too good to be true?

The answer is that the lender is usually taking on far greater risk and should

only engage in this lending with a clear understanding of the tradeoffs.

To start the comparison, let’s analyze a very common, commercially reasonable loan – the loan for the purchase of a primary residence. Assume a borrower wants to buy a house and the current average 30-year fixed rate mortgage on a residential property is 7%. Before the bank grants this loan, there are several important steps the bank takes as part of its due diligence.

The bank collects personal and financial information (income, assets, debts) through the application process and verifies the same information. The bank performs

a credit check. The bank requires title insurance on the property to verify appropriate ownership and a clear title on the subject residence. The bank orders an appraisal of the subject property to ensure the asset can cover the proposed debt. The bank puts the application through professional underwriters to verify identity and assess the viability of the loan and its repayment.

Finally, if approved, the bank not only takes a promissory note promising repayment, but it takes a security interest in the property by way of a first position mortgage giving the bank the right to take the home in the event of nonpayment.

Now turn to back to other proposed opportunities for lending. Again, assuming an interest rate environment where a 30-year fixed mortgage is 7%, let’s assume a lender has an opportunity to loan someone money with 7% interest (equal to the current, assumed bank rate). Remember, that rate presumes the due diligence described in the paragraph above. The lender would be well served to engage in the same commercially reasonable due diligence as the bank. What are the finances of the proposed borrower? Did the lender run a credit check (and as an aside, what credit score is high enough)? Did the lender appraise the collateral and take a first position mortgage in the property to secure against nonpayment? To the extent the lender chooses not to engage in the same due diligence, the lender is taking on risk. The lender should ask himself or herself – why you are willing to take on risk that a traditional bank would not?

The examples above compare identical interest rates. Assuming the lender can go through identical due diligence as a bank, then the interest payment at 7% is presumably fair. Regrettably, individual (non-bank) lenders rarely engage in the appropriate due diligence to justify an interest rate equal to that offered by banks. Accordingly, they are taking on more risk.

What happens if the interest payment is 10%? It’s a more compelling oppor-



STOCK PHOTO

tunity, for sure. But, what typical safeguards should the lender be willing to give up and at what cost? That’s a tougher question.

For example, if the lender does not get security (e.g. mortgage) on the asset that is the subject of the loan... is that worth a 3% increase in interest rate, a 5% increase? If the lender doesn’t get a title report or conduct a credit check, how does that additional risk translate to an increased interest rate? Any deviation from standard due diligence and collateral should result in a higher interest rate because the lender is necessarily taking on more risk.

Consider personal loans offered by a bank. These types of loans are not secured by a mortgage. And for that risk, the bank might charge an additional ~4% interest rate above the rate of a comparable amount of money secured by a home. Further, the bank will require repayment in a much shorter timeframe. But, even a personal loan from a bank typically involves due diligence in the form of application, credit checks, and debt to income analysis. And, that due diligence

then translates to the offered interest rate.

When all is considered, the lender might find that potential “guaranteed” loan is too good to be true because it lacks the due diligence protections that would otherwise apply to bank-financed loans. The prospective lender might be trading additional risk without knowing it. The key is to understand the risk and price the loan accordingly – something banks are typically better suited for than individuals.

*The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual or entity. This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific individualized tax or legal advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific situation with a qualified tax or legal advisor.*

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

## Endless Orchards Cider earns top honors at Best of the Northwest Awards

**Endless Orchard Cider earned top honors at Sip Magazine’s 13th Annual Best of the Northwest Cider Awards, with three of its signature ciders recognized for their exceptional quality and unique flavor profiles.**

**Ward Media** | Wenatchee Business Journal

**T**he awards celebrate the best craft ciders in the region.

Award-Winning Ciders:

- Eternal Sunshine Pineapple-Mango – Imperial (with Adjuncts) – DOUBLE GOLD Summer in a glass. Eternal Sunshine Pineapple-Mango shines with refreshment. Sweet, but not too sweet, with a medium dry finish.

- Boundless Blueberry Basil – Botanical – SILVER The flavors of Boundless Blueberry-Basil are stimulating, savory & distinct... but never overwhelming.

- Radiant Mimosa Orange – Cocktail Inspired – DOUBLE GOLD Add some sparkle to brunch (or any time of day), Radiant Mimosa-Orange is a classy take on a fresh-squeezed mimosa. Citrusy goodness.

“We’re honored to have our ciders recognized in such a competitive field,” said Sam Keirse, Cider Operations Manager at

Endless Orchard Cider. “We continue to try and push the boundaries of traditional cider-making by combining unexpected flavors that resonate with our customers and elevate their cider experience.”



**COURTESY OF ENDLESS ORCHARDS CIDER**

Endless Orchard Cider’s celebrated creations – Eternal Sunshine Pineapple-Mango, Boundless Blueberry Basil, and Radiant Mimosa Orange – earned top honors at Sip Magazine’s 13th Annual Best of the Northwest Cider Awards for their exceptional quality and unique profiles.

“Receiving this level of recognition in less than a year since the launch of Endless Orchard is remarkable,” said Vicki Daigneault, General Manager of Endless Orchard. “Our use of Arctic® apples allows the consumer to experience our incredible clarity, crispness, and elevated quality of our ciders.”

To learn more about Endless Orchard Cider or to explore their award-winning collection, visit [www.endlessorchardcider.com](http://www.endlessorchardcider.com) or follow @endlessorchardcider on social media.

Endless Orchard Hard Pressed Cider is the only cider made using Washington-grown Arctic® apples.

The company blends traditional techniques with modern innovation to craft champagne-like ciders. They offer classic blends, seasonal creations, and diverse flavors that cater to all tastes and occasions.

**LEAVENWORTH**  
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# ADVENTURE

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# Finance

## How to sell a rental property without paying taxes

**Tyler Kert**

Contributor for Ward Media



**A**re you tired of dealing with the terrible T's – Tenants, toilets, and trash?

Rental properties have historically been excellent investments. But there comes a time for many investors when the headaches of dealing with renters outweigh the benefits. When you get that third call from your rental management company while on vacation in a different time zone, you'll know what I mean.

So, if you've had enough and you'd like to get out of the rental game, there is good news and bad news. The good news is that, most likely, your rental property has gone up in value significantly since you purchased it. The bad news is that the IRS will want to take a chunk of those profits when you go to sell. Clients are often excited to sell their properties until they realize how much of their profit will go to taxes. But what if there was a way to get rid of the headaches and keep receiving your rental income all without taking the tax hit? If that sounds intriguing, a DST might

be what you're looking for.

### What is a Delaware Statutory Trust (DST)?

A Delaware Statutory Trust is a legal entity established under Delaware law that allows multiple investors to hold fractional ownership in real estate assets. It is a professionally managed real estate portfolio similar to a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT). However, unlike a REIT, a DST will allow you to use a 1031 exchange to sell your rental property and invest the proceeds into the DST without paying capital gains taxes.

When you sell your rental and invest in a DST, you aren't trading your real estate for a different kind of investment. You're trading real estate for other real estate. This is the reason that the 1031 exchange is allowed. DSTs are structured to hold real estate properties, typically high-quality commercial assets like apartment complexes, self-storage, retail centers, and industrial facilities. You can then

purchase fractional shares in the DST and gain proportional ownership in the trust's real estate holdings.

DSTs are managed by a professional sponsor who handles property acquisition, management, and eventual disposition. As the investor, you receive passive income distributions without the burden of managing the property yourself.

### Benefits of Investing in a DST

So why should you consider using a 1031 exchange to invest in a DST when you sell your rental? Number one is the tax deferral that you can achieve while still receiving a passive income stream. You can kiss the terrible "T"s goodbye and keep your monthly income.

Furthermore, DSTs provide access to institutional-grade real estate that you likely can't afford on your own, helping lower your risk. You can divide your DST investment across different types of real estate in different locations across the country which allows you

to achieve a level of diversification that is difficult without collaborating with other investors.

DSTs are also an excellent estate planning tool. Rental properties can be difficult to pass on to heirs because they aren't easily divisible. Beneficiaries may have to choose between either buying each other out or selling the property to evenly distribute the proceeds. Because DSTs are ownership interests, they can be easily split. Each beneficiary can either hold the investment or liquidate as they see fit.

### Key Considerations Before Investing in a DST

Before you invest in a DST, make sure that it will accomplish your goals. DST investments are generally illiquid, meaning you cannot easily sell your interest before the trust's assets are sold. DSTs typically have a hold period of 7-10 years, so you should be prepared for a long-term commitment. Also, you will have no direct control over property



management decisions. The DST sponsor will make all the choices.

DSTs are real estate investments and are subject to market fluctuations and economic conditions. Just like the rental that you currently own, the monthly income is not guaranteed, and neither is market value appreciation.

### Is a DST Right for You?

DSTs can be an excellent option if you're looking for tax-deferral, passive income, diversification, and efficient estate planning solutions. However, they are best suited for those who can tolerate a long-term investment horizon and limited liquidity. Don't invest in a DST if you know that you will need access to the principal amount in the near future.

As with any real estate investment, it is essential

to do your due diligence before investing. If you're considering a DST investment or would like to learn more about them, work with a trusted financial advisor or CPA specializing in tax-smart investment strategies to help you make a wise choice.

*This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute financial, investment, or tax advice. Please consult your tax advisor or financial planner to discuss your specific circumstances before making any decisions.*

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

## SPONSORED CONTENT

## Sustainable Practices for Restaurants: Transform your waste management with Winton Mfg

From Winton Manufacturing Compost Works

**A**s sustainability becomes a higher priority for businesses, restaurants are perfectly positioned to lead the charge in reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly practices.

One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by implementing a comprehensive composting program.

By working with Winton Manufacturing Compost Works, restaurants can streamline the transition to composting, improving waste management and enhancing their environmental impact.

### Implementation strategies: Utilize Winton Mfg's expertise

From staff training to sorting station setup, Winton Mfg offers the knowledge and tools to ensure a smooth implementation.

#### Staff training

The first step is ensuring that every staff member understands what can and cannot be composted. Clear, visual sorting guides in both kitchen and dining areas help employees easily identify compostable materials. Hold hands-on training sessions and foster

a culture of waste consciousness by discussing sustainability regularly at team meetings. Empower your staff to take ownership of the composting process and integrate waste reduction into your restaurant's culture. There are also great training videos available for reference and to train staff.

#### Sorting station setup

A well-organized composting station is essential for compliance. Designate a clear, accessible area in the kitchen where team members can sort waste. Place composting bins near

primary food prep areas to capture organic waste as it's produced. Clearly label bins with "Compost," "Trash," and "Recycling" to make sorting intuitive. Having composting bins close to workstations encourages participation and system maintenance.

### Approved products transition

Audit your restaurant's disposable products and replace non-compostable items with certified "CMA" alternatives. Work with suppliers for smooth transitions to "CMA" compostable products made from molded fiber, plant-based plastics, and uncoated paper. These materials reduce waste while maintaining functionality and durability. For a list of "CMA" products go to <https://compostmanufacturingalliance.com/product-tag/cma-i/>.

### Common challenges and solutions

Like any new initiative,



Dena Regan - McGlinn's

implementing a composting program comes with challenges, but they can be overcome with proper planning and commitment.

#### Contamination

Contamination is one of the biggest challenges in composting, as non-compostable materials can end up in the composting bin. To minimize this risk, implement strict training and provide clear signage throughout the restaurant. The more visual cues you offer, the less chance there is for mistakes.

#### Initial cost

Compostable products

often come with a higher upfront cost. However, view this as a long-term investment. The reduction in waste disposal costs and positive environmental impact can offset initial expenses. Composting also positions your restaurant as an eco-conscious brand, attracting loyal, environmentally aware customers.

### Employee resistance

Some employees may initially resist the switch to composting, especially if they are used to the convenience of traditional waste disposal methods. To overcome this, consider incentive programs that reward staff for successful implementation. Show them the environmental benefits of composting, and celebrate milestones to keep the team motivated.

### Measuring success

Tracking your composting program's success will help you identify areas for

# Q & A



## Meet Carl Florea, Mayor of Leavenworth

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

**F**lorea has led Leavenworth since 2020, steering the small town through growth and change. Now serving his second term, Florea prioritizes tackling challenges like housing affordability, upgrading infrastructure, and balancing the needs of Leavenworth's residents with its booming tourism industry.

Florea has focused on addressing community needs throughout his career, including directing Upper Valley MEND, where he launched a program for permanently affordable homeownership.

His concern over Leavenworth's housing challenges, driven by its tourism economy, inspired him to serve on the planning commission, city council, and ultimately run for mayor in 2019 to champion sustainable housing solutions.

Recently we caught up with Florea to learn more about his insights on Leavenworth's future, its challenges and opportunities.

Florea brings a wealth of experience to the role, including years of work in housing advocacy and community development.

### How long have you been in this role?

I was elected in November 2019 and started my first term in 2020, re-elected in 2023, so I am about one year into my second term.

### What makes Leavenworth unique, and how do you plan to leverage these qualities for the city's growth?

Leavenworth is unique in that we remain a small

community of about 2,500 residents that hosts over 3,000,000 visiting guests on a yearly basis. So that means we function more like a city with a population of 20,000 in terms of the services we must provide and infrastructure we must have in place.

But it also provides us with amenities like many varied restaurants that most small-town communities our size cannot usually support.

Our strong economic engine means that we can provide for our residents, but it also means that we are in danger of losing our community through displacement as we draw in more people wanting to own a second home in Leavenworth. Second homes now make up nearly 40% of our housing stock, and that is not sustainable for any community. We want our growth to benefit our community, not be a detriment to it.

### What specific sectors or industries do you believe hold the most promise for Leavenworth's economic future, and how do you plan to support their growth?

We understand that tourism will always be one of the biggest drivers for our economic future. That being said, we are interested in expanding our commercial and light industrial spaces outside our City's Bavarian downtown core. I could see the potential for some light manufacturing that connects to the tourism industry, with an outdoor focused product. There are also businesses that

are conducted largely online - we can offer their workforce natural beauty and outdoor activities that would make a relocation attractive to them. We saw this occurring during the pandemic when people who could work from home decided that Leavenworth was a better place to telework than the bigger cities.

### What motivated you to pursue a career in public service?

I have always had a strong focus on serving my community. When I had a young family, I served on the board for the Cascade School District and even coached or officiated sports for all three of my sons. I began with Upper Valley MEND to address the needs of the community in 1988 and served as its director until 2007.

Starting out, I became increasingly concerned about housing and the impact our popular tourism economy was having on affordability.

Because of this I was encouraged to get on the planning commission, which I did. While at MEND I started a permanently affordable homeownership program using the community land trust model. I served two different stints on the city council before leaving Leavenworth for about six years in 2007.

I moved back in 2013 to serve as the administrator of Cornerstone Community, an adult family home for developmentally disabled adults. Seeing how little had been done to expand our workforce housing is what inspired me to run for mayor in 2019.

### What's the most important lesson you've learned so far in your role as mayor?

I have learned many lessons over the years, and I don't know if I could determine the most important one, but I do know that an important lesson that stays with me is that nothing worth doing is going to be easy or quick to accomplish. Everything takes longer than I think it should at the start. The important thing is to stay focused on what your goals are, and know why you are doing what you do, and then being persistent in your pursuit of those goals and letting go of an outcome that you really can't control.

### What does a normal day look like as mayor?

What I enjoy about being a mayor is that there really is no such thing as a normal day. There are simply so many things needing attention, such a variety of issues, challenges, and meetings. With a number of evening meetings, I do try to get away from the office by mid-afternoon on most days.

My wife reminds me that this is not a full-time job, and I am supposed to be semi-retired. But when you enjoy what you do, and are pursuing things that are meaningful to you, it's easy to give the effort.

### What is your favorite part of your job and why?

I got involved because of how meaningful community is to me. And what makes a city a true community is its diversity: diversity of people, ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions. So, my favorite part is getting to interact with so many different people on things that are important to them. I enjoy meeting with students, seniors, new residents, local agency partners, and the diverse range of visitors.

### What are the biggest challenges facing Leavenworth currently, and how do you plan to address them?

Like a lot of communities, Leavenworth is dealing with an aging infrastructure system with water and sewer pipes that

need to be replaced, and in some cases, upsized. In addition, we have the added demands put on our systems by the millions of visitors we host each year. With a high influx of visitors brings the need to address adequate parking for everyone, visitors and residents alike. But there is no greater challenge facing Leavenworth, in my mind, than our current housing crisis and the fact that so many who contribute to the health and well-being of our town and its economy can no longer afford to live here. We are beginning to address our infrastructure needs with an integrated capital improvement plan, and our housing needs by allowing for a variety of different housing types on smaller lots. But ultimately, to really address our housing needs it will take a funding stream that allows us to allocate dollars and put into place more restrictions on who gets to purchase those housing units funded by those dollars.

### What are the key goals you hope to achieve for

See **CARL FLOREA** Page 16

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# Keeping Up with people

## Chelan entrepreneur opens luxury travel agency

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Ken Moore, a longtime Chelan entrepreneur, has launched Moore Travel, a luxury travel consultancy aimed at serving the specific needs of travelers in the Chelan Valley region.

The virtual agency, which opened January 3, focuses on providing personalized travel services ranging from short trips to round-the-world cruises.

Moore, a Certified Travel Advisor (CTA) and Fora Travel Pro, brings specialized training in luxury leisure travel to the venture.

"It's always been a desire of mine to share my personal travel experiences and expertise with others who are on the go," Moore said.

"Chelan is not the easi-



Ken Moore

est place to travel to and from, so locals need to have some clever skills and reliable advice to manage the slim offerings."

Through affiliations with Virtuoso and Fora Travel in New York, Moore offers access to exclusive travel opportunities and real-time data not available to the general public.

The agency provides comprehensive services including transportation booking, hotel reservations, restaurant arrangements, and specialized tour guides.

Moore cited a recent client's trip to France as an example of the agency's tailored approach.

"I spent a fair amount of time getting to know their interests and then booked hotels, scheduled reservations at Michelin-rated restaurants, arranged private transfers, curated tours with outstanding activities reflecting their personal interests – not the jewelry stores and tourist traps common in foreign countries," he ex-

See **TRAVEL AGENCY** Page 16

## Icicle Creek Center for the Arts names Monica Miller its new Executive Director

Caroline Menna | Ward Media Intern

Icicle Creek Center for the Arts's (ICCA) Board of Directors have named Monica Miller as its new Executive Director (ED).

Miller, who holds a BA in Studio Arts from The College of William and Mary and an MA in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins University, will succeed Phil Lacey.

Lacey has transitioned to the ED position at Icicle Fund, a nonprofit that supports arts organizations, including ICCA, in North Central Washington.

"Whenever I have been [on the ICCA campus], I have felt the energy of place and how it can act as a catalyst for creativity and human connection," said Miller, who went on to state that she also appreciates how the "beauty of ICCA is inspiring to both artists and the community."

Miller has spent the last decade as the director of Ellensburg's Gallery One Visual Arts Center, a community-focused gallery featuring rotating exhibitions of Pacific Northwest contemporary art and art classes.

Her work at Gallery One, and previously as Director of Seattle's Fre-



COURTESY OF MONICA MILLER  
Monica Miller is poised to take the reins as Executive Director of Icicle Creek Center for the Arts.

mont Solstice Parade, has left Miller with a "holistic view of what it takes to work for a non-profit with a mission to support artists."

That's my passion: advocating for artists and to help create and grow resources and infrastructure needed for them to provide opportunities for the greater community."

ICCA, which faced existential financial stress prior to, and during the first half of, the pandemic, has since placed itself in a state of long-term financial stability.

Over the last several years, "the Board, Phil [Lacey], and the staff made smart choices and have done a great job

shoring up the programming by figuring out which programs both work artistically and are viable financially," relates Miller.

"They've laid solid groundwork for the next steps, which include continuing to build on the demand for beautiful experiences in the arts. Attendance is proving that the community wants a diversity of events. I'm excited about their choices and want to build upon those kinds of programs that represent and reflect the passions, interests, and heritage of the community."

Miller takes the helm at ICCA in February.

ICCA, founded by the late Harriet Bullitt in 1995, has also named Bob Maher as the President of its Board.

The previous president, Ellen Beardsley, remains on the Board with the title of Past President.

*Caroline Menna is an intern for Ward Media and a senior (Class of 2025) at Cascade High School. She serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Cascade High School Publications Group.*

### Ballmer Group

Continued from page 1

potential of the next generation, helping today's young people explore their options as shapers and stakeholders of tomorrow's strong communities," said Karen Hedine, Washington State Alliance of YMCAs Chair, and CEO of the Walla Walla YMCA, in a press release.

The contribution will be distributed among the Washington State Alliance of YMCAs, which leverages the collective strength of 14 independent 501c3 nonprofit YMCA associations, including Wenatchee Valley YMCA.

"I know that the other Y's are as excited as we are that we're being recognized as a youth service provider of excellence... It's amazing just being recognized by them, but more importantly, in their help in wanting to help us bring more efforts towards serving low income families," said Dorry Foster, CEO

Wenatchee Valley YMCA.

"We can breathe a little bit and be able to explore what else we can do to expand that mission."

The Wenatchee Valley YMCA will receive about \$467,000 of the contribution over the next three-years, which will go towards supporting the Y's teen outreach initiatives, which includes its two teen centers that are available free to every middle school student in the valley, its gang prevention work in Eastmont School District, youth sports, and its Extreme Teen camps.

"Our guarantee is that no child ever is ever denied access or participation due to the inability to pay, so it helps us with that guarantee," said Foster.

According to Foster, the

YMCA has yet to allocate the contribution to specific initiatives, but she is hopeful that the news of the contribution will remind Wenatchee Valley families that the YMCA is there for support.

"I hope it brings awareness... We have an enormous, passionate board that helps us assess the community at any given level. But if this allows others to know that we're here for them and they want to come to the table and help us expand that, I think ultimately that would be probably all of our goal, is to be able to serve better, and we can do that with awareness," said Foster.

*Taylor Caldwell:  
509-433-7276 or  
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# Chelan County students inspire change at state level

**Chelan County students were formally invited to present their climate and environmental science projects with legislators and state agency leaders at a statewide summit on Jan. 28.**

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

The annual Environmental & Sustainability Literacy, hosted by Pacific Education Institute (PEI) and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), invited 22 student groups from around Washington state to share with state legislators, state agencies, community leaders, and each other.

Of those groups, Beaver Valley Elementary's fourth graders were selected to share their camera trapping program, and Wenatchee High School's Earth Club presented their school-wide composting initiative.

"I hope that other people can see that you don't have to have a position

of authority to make a change. I just started talking to administration and finding solutions, trying to bring people together in the community that we're already trying to make change, and finding money where it is, and just kind of working with what we have," said Earth Club president and WHS senior Eva Phillippi.

After noticing unsustainable practices in the cafeteria, Phillippi reached out to Winton Manufacturing Compost Works (Winton MFG), a Leavenworth-based composting facility, earlier this year.

Winton MFG, alongside Sustainable NCW and Wenatchee Rotary Club, helped the Earth Club do a

waste audit on the school, which revealed that 70 percent of the school's waste could be composted.

Phillippi used Earth Club funds to purchase 10 compost bins for the school cafeteria and kitchen, with Winton MFG providing tools for auditing and sorting, compost bags, and weekly pick-up services.

"It was kind of crazy to see how much was being wasted and how simple of a fix it would be to switch it... we're lucky enough to have [Winton MFG] as a partner that we're working with super close to our area. But really, it's not that hard of a switch to make, but it makes a big difference," said clubmember Maren Stuber.

While the high school's kitchen and janitorial department was quick to accommodate the changes, the Earth Club is still learning ways to educate students and shift behaviors.

However, the club has made considerable progress. Since implementation, the school has made the switch from disposable trays to reusable. Phillippi also estimates that the school has diverted about 24 cubic yards since November.

Phillippi, Stuber, and clubmember Ava Jo Berry attended the summit with club adviser Daniel Deal and Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher Jenaia Johnson to share their initiative and inspire waste reduction efforts across the state.

"[I hope they] continue advocating and just finding their own passion, especially if it's this route in environmental justice or sustainability, that they can continue to spread that as they move on to



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA  
Maren Stuber, Eva Phillippi, and Ava Jo Berry presented Wenatchee High School's composting initiative at the Environmental & Sustainability Literacy Student Summit.

college or wherever else," said Johnson.

For Beaver Valley Elementary fourth graders, presenting their camera trapping program was an opportunity to inspire more classrooms to incorporate outdoor, hands-on learning.

"We think that all schools should have a camera trapping program. That's what the kids are putting out there, is why we think all students in Washington should have a camera trapping program, and how it gets the kids out and having fun getting to know their area," said Beaver Valley teacher Eric Tiegel.

Through the program,

the students study local wildlife through trail cameras placed through the Lake Wenatchee and Plain area, observing changes in the environment and animal behavior throughout the school year.

Tiegel's second through fourth grade class receives a visit from the program's lead Jeff Layton each month to discuss what is currently happening in their environment, and how it may affect the wildlife.

Then, the collective K-12 classrooms join together to watch the footage collected from the previous month, such as a coyote

See **STUDENT SUMMIT** Page 14



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# MEMBER MESSENGER

"Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business"

FEBRUARY 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 2

## Empowering Professionals: A Big Thanks to JD SA, BMP, and Our Amazing Audience



We extend our sincere gratitude to the teams at Jeffers, Danielson, Sonn & Aylward (JD SA), and Boyer Mountain Pool & Excavation (BMP) for delivering an outstanding presentation on lien laws and contracts in Washington State.

Your expertise and clear explanations provided a comprehensive understanding of these critical legal topics, offering practical insights that will help us better navigate the com-

plexities of contractual obligations and lien enforcement.

The presentation was not only informative but also highly engaging, shedding light on key considerations for protecting business interests and ensuring compliance with state regulations.

From practical tips on drafting effective contracts to navigating potential disputes, your knowledge has empowered us to approach these areas with greater

confidence and clarity.

We truly appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to tailoring the presentation to address our specific needs and challenges.

Your commitment to supporting and educating professionals is deeply valued.

Thank you for sharing your expertise, and we look forward to collaborating with you again in the future!

Building NCW would also want to thank every-



one who attended and contributed to the success of this event. Your participation and thoughtful questions made the session

even more impactful.

*As we plan our next seminar, we would love your input!*

Please share your ideas or suggest topics you'd like

us to cover in future sessions – we value your feedback and want to ensure we're addressing the issues most important to you.



## Welcome

### NEW MEMBERS





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.



#### LOCATED AT:

2201 N. Wenatchee Ave. Wenatchee, WA 98801

PHONE: (509) 293-5840

#### Email us for more information:

[Info@BuildingNCW.org](mailto:Info@BuildingNCW.org)

[www.BuildingNCW.org](http://www.BuildingNCW.org)

## 2025 Events

### JANUARY

JAN. 14 - LEIN LAWS SEMINAR

JAN. 31 - HOME SHOW SET UP DAY

### FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 1 - 26TH ANNUAL HOME SHOW DAY 1

FEBRUARY 2 - 26TH ANNUAL HOME SHOW DAY 2

### JUNE

JUNE 27 - ANNUAL SUMMER GOLF TOURNAMENT

### AUGUST

AUGUST 1 - HOME BUILDERS & HOME RUNS - BNCW NIGHT AT THE WENATCHEE APPLESOX

AUGUST 8 - DEADLINE FOR BUILDERS TO BE IN HOME TOUR

### SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 18 - CHEFS ON TOUR

SEPTEMBER 19 - 31ST ANNUAL HOME TOUR DAY 1

SEPTEMBER 20 - 31ST ANNUAL HOME TOUR DAY 2

SEPTEMBER 21 - 31ST ANNUAL HOME TOUR DAY 3

### OCTOBER

OCTOBER 3 - FALL GOLF CLASSIC WITH NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

OCTOBER 18 - CHELAN HOME TOUR DAY 1

OCTOBER 19 - CHELAN HOME TOUR DAY 2

REACH OUT TO US ABOUT OUR MONTHLY SAFETY CLASSES  
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# MEMBER MESSENGER

“Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business”

FEBRUARY 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 3



## Building NCW Loves Our Members! Introducing Our New Referral Program!

At Building NCW, we value our Members and the incredible contributions you make to our thriving business community.

We truly believe that We are Stronger Together! That’s why we’re excited to launch our **New Referral Program** – designed to reward YOU for sharing about your Membership with others!

Here’s how it works:

- **Refer businesses you know:** Spread the word

about the opportunities and resources Building NCW offers.

- **Save on your membership dues:** For every new Member you refer who joins Building NCW, you’ll earn savings on your annual Membership renewal. The more referrals, the bigger your discount!
- **Strengthen our community:** Every new Member helps expand our network, creating more connections and opportunities for all!

### Why Participate?

Being part of Building NCW means access to

valuable resources, powerful networking opportunities, amazing benefits,

fueling our ability to advocate more, and the chance to be a voice for businesses in our region.

By referring others, you’re not just helping them – you’re helping to grow and enrich our entire association and community.

**It’s Easy to Start:**

1. Share about the benefits of Building NCW Membership with colleagues, partners, and

fellow business owners.

2. Encourage them to join and mention your name as their referral.
3. Enjoy your well-deserved savings!

This is our way of saying “Thank You” for your continued support and dedication.

Let’s build an even stronger network together – because **Building NCW loves our Members!**

Start referring today and watch the rewards roll in!





Save the Date

Sept. 18 - Sept. 21



Will you be our Valentine?

Happy Valentines Day from the BNCW Staff



## 2025 Home Maintenance Guide

Check out our Directory for Businesses to help with home maintenance and repair!



<b>January</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check screws on doors + locks</li><li>• Clean dishwasher drain bin</li><li>• Deep clean oven post holiday cooking + baking</li><li>• Check electrical cords, replace if needed</li><li>• Check + change HVAC Filter</li></ul>	<b>February</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check attic for roof leaks</li><li>• Check under sinks for plumbing failures</li><li>• Check outside HVAC Filter for debris</li><li>• Check fire extinguisher</li><li>• Dust + wash window blinds</li><li>• Clean eaves</li></ul>	<b>March</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check aerators on faucets, nozzles, + drains</li><li>• Check + repair window weather stripping + operation</li><li>• Check + change HVAC Filter</li><li>• Inspect water heater</li><li>• Clean window screens</li><li>• Turn sprinklers on; check for leaks</li></ul>
<b>April</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take snow tires off April 1</li><li>• Check exterior paint</li><li>• Wash cabinets + apply wax or oil (per manufacturer instructions)</li><li>• Inspect grout + caulk</li><li>• Trim trees + bushes</li><li>• Irrigation start up and check</li></ul>	<b>May</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check outside concrete, repair if needed</li><li>• Check exterior doors weather stripping, lubricate if needed</li><li>• Schedule back flow test</li><li>• Check cabinet hinges + knobs alignment + tighten</li><li>• Check + change HVAC filter</li><li>• Schedule Window Cleaning</li></ul>	<b>June</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean garbage disposal</li><li>• Check dryer unit for clogs inside + outside</li><li>• Inspect roof for repairs</li><li>• Re-nail any loose siding or trim</li><li>• Check house + garage for any rotting wood + replace</li></ul>
<b>July</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean + lubricate window + sliding glass door tracks</li><li>• Check + clean outdoor fireplace + grill</li><li>• Check GFCI outlets</li><li>• Clear away any flammable items away from home</li><li>• Check + change HVAC Filter</li></ul>	<b>August</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean dishwasher drain bin</li><li>• Check sump pump in basement bath</li><li>• Vacuum HVAC registers</li><li>• Service HVAC Unit</li><li>• Check + repair mortar</li><li>• Schedule Irrigation Blow Out</li></ul>	<b>September</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start to winterize outdoor lawn equipment</li><li>• Check fire extinguisher</li><li>• Check emergency escape plan</li><li>• Check + change HVAC Filter</li><li>• Reseal tile grout</li><li>• Clean + check chimney flue + fire place</li></ul>
<b>October</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deep clean oven for holidays</li><li>• Clean gutters from fall leaves</li><li>• Winterize irrigation</li><li>• Disconnect hoses</li><li>• Check smoke + CO detector</li><li>• Cover air conditioning unit</li><li>• Prepare snowblower, shovel, + salt for snow</li></ul>	<b>November</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clean dishwasher Drain Bin</li><li>• Weatherproof doors + windows</li><li>• Check interior paint + repair</li><li>• Check extension cords + wires, be careful of holiday overload</li><li>• Check + Change HVAC Filter</li></ul>	<b>December</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check HVAC unit outside + remove debris</li><li>• Clean Garbage Disposal</li><li>• Check dryer unit for clogs inside and outside</li><li>• Vacuum HVAC air supply + return register</li><li>• Dust and wash blinds</li><li>• Check smoke + CO detectors</li></ul>



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# Marketing Matters

AMY YALEY  
COO of Ward Media



## The Digital marketing mix: Why multi-channel presence triples customer value

In today’s hyper-connected world, small and medium businesses in North Central Washington face a unique opportunity: the ability to leverage digital marketing across multiple channels to maximize customer engagement and value.

Studies show that customers engaging with brands across three or more channels spend an average of 300% more compared to single-channel users.

Building on the ideas explored in last month’s article, “From First Glance to First Click,” which highlighted the importance of multi-channel awareness, we now dive deeper into how your business can develop a cohesive multi-channel strategy.

**The 300% spending increase: Understanding multi-channel customer behavior**

Why do multi-channel customers spend more? The answer lies in their deeper engagement. These

customers encounter your business in different contexts – on social media, email, your website, or even through paid ads. Each touchpoint reinforces your message and keeps your brand top of mind. Multi-channel customers also tend to be more loyal, as consistent exposure builds trust over time.

For example, a customer who sees a Facebook post, clicks on an email promotion, and later visits your website to make a purchase is far more engaged than someone who encounters your business only once. By building a cohesive strategy that spans multiple platforms, you can tap into this lucrative behavior.

**Creating seamless cross-platform content**

The key to multi-channel success is consistency. Customers should have a seamless experience, regardless of the platform they’re on. Start by crafting content that can be adapted across channels

while maintaining your brand’s tone, style, and messaging.

For example, a blog post can be repurposed into bite-sized social media updates, an infographic, or a segment of your email newsletter. By tailoring the format to fit each platform while preserving the core message, you ensure your brand feels cohesive and professional.

**Identifying your most valuable channel combinations**

Not all channels are created equal. The right combination depends on where your customers spend their time. Analyze your audience’s behavior to identify the platforms that yield the highest engagement. For example, if your audience is active on Facebook and Instagram, focus your efforts there. If your website analytics show high referral traffic from Google, prioritize SEO and paid search ads.

A combination of two to four well-chosen channels

often delivers the best results for small businesses, as it balances reach with manageability.

**Mobile-first, but not mobile-only: Balancing your approach**

In North Central Washington, as in the rest of the world, mobile usage is skyrocketing.

Mobile-first design is no longer optional – it’s essential. Ensure your website is mobile-friendly, your emails are easy to read on smartphones, and your ads display well on smaller screens.

However, don’t overlook other devices. Desktop usage still accounts for a significant portion of purchases, particularly for B2B transactions. A balanced approach ensures you’re meeting customers wherever they are.

**Using data to track cross-channel customer interest**

Data is your best friend in a multi-channel strategy. Tools like Google

Analytics, social media insights, and email marketing platforms provide valuable metrics to help you understand customer behavior. Track metrics like:

- Which channels drive the most traffic
- Conversion rates for different platforms
- Engagement levels for various types of content

By analyzing this data, you can refine your strategy, allocate resources effectively, and double down on the channels delivering the highest ROI.

**Optimizing content for each platform while maintaining brand consistency**

Each platform has its unique strengths, and optimizing content for those strengths can significantly boost performance. For instance:

- **Social Media:** Short, engaging visuals or videos with strong calls to action.
- **Email:** Personalized, value-driven messaging with clear subject lines.
- **Website:** In-depth,

evergreen content like blogs or FAQs to educate and convert visitors.

Despite the differences, your brand voice and visuals should remain consistent across platforms.

Consistency builds trust and ensures that customers recognize your business wherever they encounter it.

**The Path to higher customer value**

For small and medium businesses in North Central Washington, a multi-channel digital marketing strategy is a game-changer.

By understanding multi-channel behavior, creating seamless content, leveraging data, and optimizing your efforts for both mobile and desktop users, you can drive greater engagement and unlock the 300% spending potential of your customers.

As emphasized in January’s column, “From First Glance to First Click,” meeting customers across multiple touchpoints is es-

See **MARKETING** Page 16

# Real Estate

## Top Properties Douglas County December 2024

### Residential

Sale Price	Address	Total Acres	Year Built	Residential Area	Basement Area	Bedr.	Bathr.	Garage Area
\$1,750,000	667, 4TH ST NE	0.47	1994	9016				
\$1,375,000	544, N COLORADO AVE	0.35		3177	1368	3	2	
\$1,325,000	13, S SHORE DR	0.77	2008	4033		4	3.5	1106
\$1,150,000	109, MANSFIELD RD	0.32	1993	1279	1279	3	2.5	1017
\$925,000	175, N SHORE DR	1.18	2022	1996		3	2	440
\$905,000	2874, N BAKER AVE	0.32	2015	1670	1636	4	2.5	600
\$875,000	597, EASTMONT AVE	0.17	2001	4004				
\$825,000	2805, SE FALCON VIEW DR	0.51	2019	2184		3	2.5	972
\$795,000	4790, NW CASCADE AVE	1	1990	1932		4	3	484
\$769,900	1039, S LYLE AVE	1	1986	1614	1614	2	2	720
\$730,000	1632, HUNTWOOD LN	0.26	2003	2007	1184	4	3	884
\$720,000	876, N NEWPORT LOOP	0.27	2023	2014		3	2	1005
\$650,000	1724, 10TH PL NE	0.32	1978	2138	2138	4	3.5	552
\$645,000	828, AMY CT	0.27	1993	2349		3	2.5	778
\$640,000	825, N JAMES AVE	0.25	1994	1714	1328	4	3	506
\$625,000	2253, FANCHER HEIGHTS BLVD	0.38	1995	2304		3	3	504
\$595,000	2005, VALLEY VIEW BLVD	0.38	1969	1512	1512	4	2	880
\$585,000	1304, WHEATRIDGE DR	0.28	2000	1364	1284	5	3	484
\$580,000	1830, 4TH ST SE	0.49	1985	2183		4	2	400
\$575,000	609, BRIARWOOD DR	0.31	1998	1853		4	2.5	680
\$560,000	2239, 3RD ST SE	0.12	2020	2340		5	2.5	490
\$550,555	2274, 3RD ST SE	0.19	2019	1898		3	2	585
\$545,000	101, SAGEBRUSH RD	5.11		1890		1	1	
\$539,900	421, S JARVIS AVE	0.17	2011	1920		3	2	480
\$490,000	1767, 5TH ST SE	0.15	2016	1770		3	2	400
\$485,000	1494, EASTMONT AVE #59	0	2000	1970		2	2	480
\$469,900	1722, 8TH ST NE	0.24	1973	1346	1300	3	3	625
\$457,500	1380, EASTMONT AVE #602	0	1997	1959		3	2	575
\$450,000	2301, SUNSET HWY	0.32	1968	3546		6	3.5	728

### Farm

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
PAUL &, JACOB HENRY	TRIAD FINANCIAL SERVICES INC.	\$496,922	350, Palisades Rd	5.46
SCHMIDT ESTATE, NILA M	STEELE, ZACHERY L. & SHENAE T.	\$264,375		374.76
TIFT ORCHARDS LLC	SANTOS CHURAPE, BALTAZAR	\$207,600	27A, Buckingham Alley	20.21
DEL ROSARIO, RENATO	CARTER, BENJAMIN	\$200,000	1635, Palisades Rd	20
BOWEN, JUSTIN & SHEIANNE	TUPLING, NORMAN & TARA	\$69,000	1136, RD 16 NE	20.8
SWANK FARM	TAYLOR- 7.7% INTEREST, PETER LEIGH	\$24,000		1008.65

### Commercial

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
PARKWAY ASSOCIATES	NEFF, G.DEAN & HEATHER	\$2,260,000	500, VALLEY MALL PKWY #A	0.5
DAVIS LAND GROUP LLC	DCTA LLC	\$45,000		266.84

\$449,900	2392, SILO DR	0.28	2007	1356		3	2	484
\$440,000	2273, SE SAGE BROOKE RD	0.11	2022	1372		3	2	440
\$439,000	2012, VALLEY VIEW BLVD	0.29	1978	1532	1508	4	2.75	624
\$427,500	2518, SUNSET HWY	0.31	1975	1176	1176	4	3	546
\$419,000	425, N LARCH AVE	0.15	1974	1359		3	2	
\$410,000	928, 11TH ST NE	0.16	1984	744	744	3	2	480
\$409,500	1601, MORGAN BLVD	0.24	1977	1056		3	1	
\$405,000	2487, 4TH ST NE	0.31	1996	1404		3	2	720
\$405,000	1126, N BAKER AVE	0.21	1974	1412		3	1	
\$380,000	621, S IOWA AVE	0.35	1991	1200		3	2	528
\$375,000	151, 27TH ST NE	0.42	1962	1200		3	1	
\$368,900	271, LESLIE WAY	0.32	1952	780		2	1	
\$365,000	225, 19TH ST NE #10	0	1980	1679		2	2	529

Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County

December 2024

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
ALPINE ADVENTURES LLC	CASCADE ECO PROPERTIES LLC	\$1,390,000	17375 HIGH MOUNTAIN MEADOWS RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
REDWINE VIRGIL D & TERA D	ANDAL SHARON E	\$1,300,000	103 N PARK ST	CHELAN	1900	0			0	N	N
PETERSON MARK S & MICHELE L	YOUNT TRACY & M KATIE	\$1,184,000	2180 NUMBER 2 CANYON RD	WENATCHEE	2853	1992	4	2.75	867	N	Y
MC AULIFFE DAVID S ETAL	SYMONDS NICHOLAS & TIANA	\$1,127,500	12817 SHORE ST	LEAVENWORTH	2377	1996	3	3.25	504	N	Y
SCHOENBERGER DONALD F ETAL	LAMBE MARY E	\$1,100,000	184 EAGLE PL	LEAVENWORTH	2690	2003	3	2.5	875	N	Y
PETTER TERENCE D & JANE E	SUNDANCE SLOPE LLC	\$1,100,000	UNASSIGNED	MANSON	0	0			0	N	N
AINSLEY SAMANTHA L & VOLUM RYAN H	TUMWATER PROPERTIES LLC	\$1,050,000	625 CEDAR ST	LEAVENWORTH	1912	2024			0	N	Y
SNOWCREEK 1112 SUPREMO LLC	ANDERSON WILLIAM & TARA	\$1,000,000	1112 COMMERCIAL ST	LEAVENWORTH	1986	1907	5	4.5	0	N	N
PORT OF CHELAN COUNTY	CORNELIUS HOLDINGS LLC	\$1,000,000	7785 BLEWETT CUTOFF RD	PESHASTIN	0	0			0	N	N
JOYCM LLC	GBI HOLDING CO	\$1,000,000	925 S MISSION ST	WENATCHEE	2400	1977			0	N	N
SACKETT RANDALL W & KATHRYN S	CARLISLE MATTHEW & HURD STACEY C	\$985,000	210 PINEGRASS ST	LEAVENWORTH	2690	2021	5	3	440	N	Y
JONES SEQUOIA & JAYME S	FRANCKOWIAK MICHAEL W	\$975,000	297 APPLETON LN	CHELAN	1253	1978	3	2.25	1365	Y	N
ZERCHER EDWARD	DILLON PAUL L & KAREN L	\$900,000	2475 TOTEM POLE RD	MANSON	3215	1918	2	1.75	1296	N	N
MC ALLISTER JULIE & CLEM STEVEN	MIRACLE MILE REAL ESTATE LLC	\$880,000	20647 MIRACLE MILE	LAKE WENATCHEE	1917	1997	3	2	660	N	N
PAGLIA JENNA L & LOUIS J JR	FALETTO TERRY & BONNIE	\$843,000	4124 LAKEVIEW PL	CHELAN	1959	1986	3	2.5	495	N	Y
WRIGHT WAYNE W & JOYCE K	ROBERTS CONSTRUCTION LLC	\$829,000	946 RACINE SPRINGS DR	WENATCHEE	1997	2024	3	2	651	N	Y
BRYANT BEAU & ANNA	FOWLER PAUL M	\$800,000	1959 SLEEPY HOLLOW RD	WENATCHEE	2155	1990	3	2	440	N	Y
BRYANT BEAU & ANNA	FOWLER PAUL M	\$800,000	1959 SLEEPY HOLLOW RD	WENATCHEE	2155	1990	3	2	440	N	Y
UREN CINDY & DEAN	SACKMAN COLTON D & OLSON ALLY C	\$789,900	851 WHEELER HILL RD	WENATCHEE	1752	1912	3	1	0	N	N
TAMMAN MICHAEL R & KRISTINE I	SPOELSTRA HENK & LAURIE ETAL	\$769,347	22757 BROWN RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	1112	1966	2	1	520	N	Y
WYATT CHARLES & RONDA	STEINER SHERYL R	\$761,500	1920 SKYVIEW CT	WENATCHEE	1910	1999	2	2	1680	N	N
HOLLAND MERRY	LINKE SUE A	\$760,000	1018 RACINE SPRINGS DR	WENATCHEE	1963	2021	3	2	552	N	Y
BURKE DELBERT B & JUNE C	HUFFAKER KEITH N & ROBIN M	\$749,900	1409 KIRBY LN	WENATCHEE	2174	2010			786	N	Y
CRAWFORD JANET	SCHACH DAVID N & CLAUDIA	\$710,000	10970 WENDING LN	LAKE WENATCHEE	1860	2006	3	1.75	0	N	Y
BOGDAN JOHN ETAL	ROSE TAMMY & MICHAEL	\$699,000	50 ARIA LN	WENATCHEE	2158	2021	3	2	0	N	N
PAPASEDERO DANA F & JANET M	MC MAHON FAMILY REVOCABLE LVNG TRST	\$675,000	123 LOOKOUT WAY	CHELAN	1200	2017	3	2.5	0	N	N
MONTANO MONICA ETAL	MC MILLAN SHERNE M	\$631,000	619 IDAHO ST	WENATCHEE	1858	1926	6	3	288	N	Y
MARCELL TERRANCE M ETAL	SMT DEVELOPMENT CO LLC	\$627,500	3862 STAYMAN FLATS RD	CHELAN	1734	2023	3	1.75	504	N	N
TORNABENE JOSEPH A & DEBORAH J	O NEAL RONALD C	\$600,000	1770 CENTRAL AVE	WENATCHEE	2230	0			0	N	N
FALETTO TERRY M & BONNIE D	AHL DEREK A	\$600,000	424 SPRING VIEW PL	CHELAN	1528	2019	3	2	704	N	N
KAUFMAN JASON & ENGEL NATALIE	ARREDONDO ALFREDO & CARRIE	\$575,000	926 HIGHLAND DR	WENATCHEE	1620	1926	3	3	396	N	Y
KREICK BRIAN J	EDAGI FERNANDO K & GEERDINK GABRIELA M	\$570,000	21 N ELLIOTT AVE	WENATCHEE	1766	1966	3	3	484	N	Y
MC CORMICK ROBERT & MICHELLE TRUST	MPV INVESTMENTS LLC	\$570,000	322 W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	902	0			0	N	N
REYES JOSE M ETAL	GONZALES JESSICA L	\$562,000	1404 JOHN ST	WENATCHEE	1768	2004	4	2	755	N	Y
HOPS AN VINE LLC	HINTERLAND FARMS TRS LLC	\$550,000	71 SR 150	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
KLOTZBUECHER JUSTIN & KLOTZBUECHER WERNER V	HULET ROBERT	\$540,000	2845 RIVIERA BLVD	MALAGA	2236	1992	3	2.5	648	N	Y
BUTLER MOLLY N	MORRELL ANDREA K	\$539,999	2213 5TH ST	WENATCHEE	1912	1995	3	2.5	624	N	Y
BROWN GUDRUN	BUSWELL CAROL	\$535,000	103 OAK ST	CASHMERE	1503	1959	3	1.75	312	N	Y
MC FALL MATT J	SPARKS JEFFREY	\$535,000	1622 MAPLE ST	WENATCHEE	2398	1971	4	2.5	750	Y	Y
VON MELVILLE SHERI K & CHRISTOPHER F	ECKER CARY & REGINA TERRANOVA	\$533,000	20701 CLUB HOUSE DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	1548	0			0	N	N
HENDRICKS TANNER D & ABBY K	EVANS RICHARD L	\$525,000	1815 ROCKLUND DR	WENATCHEE	1886	1994			0	N	Y
RE MATTHEW R & SATO RE MIMI K	DALGAS GEOFFREY C & JENNIFER L	\$520,000	213 VIEWLAND WAY	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
TREECE BRADLEY	GODWIN REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST	\$515,000	25810 BRIDLE LN	PLAIN	1100	1989	3		300	N	Y
VOROBIEV VICTOR & IRINA	LUKES PAUL J	\$510,000	8125 ICICLE RD	LEAVENWORTH	0	0			0	N	N
AKEN JEFFREY M & HAYES SUMMER	CARTER KAI P & MANDI M BURTON-CARTER	\$510,000	505 PIONEER DR	WENATCHEE	1362	1951	3	1.75	600	N	Y
DIAZ ALLISON & JULIO C JR	V & Z BUILDERS LLC	\$489,500	2040 METHOW ST	WENATCHEE	1720	2008	3	2.5	450	N	Y
BRUNO GREGORY R & KAYSE L	BURKE JUNE & DELBERT	\$485,000	1422 SENECA ST	WENATCHEE	1034	1980	2	1.75	500	N	Y
PATTERSON BRIANNA L	GALE ANDREW J & LESLIE M	\$480,000	1307 SPRINGWATER AVE	WENATCHEE	1142	1954	4	2	572	N	Y
POTTER GRANT & MARYKATHRYN	BUAK NICOLE M	\$480,000	1505 MEDINA PL	WENATCHEE	1464	1984	3	1.75	572	N	Y
STEINKE FLYNN & ENGLISH BRIEANNA	SABEY LANCE	\$470,000	18530 NASON RIDGE RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	1200	2011	1	1.5	840	N	N
CHELAN VALLEY ORCHARDS LLC	HUISMAN OENES & MARY ANN	\$470,000	172 SAWTOOTH RIDGE LN	MANSON	0	0			0	N	N
FRALEY SAMANTHA & GRAMS NICKOLAS	FRALEY PETER A & CINDY L	\$460,000	1524 WALNUT CT	WENATCHEE	1782	1978	5	2.5	896	N	Y
BENNETT JOHN & JULIE TRUST	DORSING TERRY ETAL	\$450,000	7071 ICICLE RD	LEAVENWORTH	1584	1990	2	1.5	0	N	Y
PEREZ LOUIS & ESTRADA KATHY	PEREZ ANTONIO & DE JESUS VALENCIA MARIA	\$450,000	1005 WALKER AVE	WENATCHEE	1444	1928	3	1	320	N	N
MC SPARIN BRANDON & CAMP WINIFRED	MANRY GAIL J	\$450,000	720 YAKIMA ST	WENATCHEE	1361	1940	2	1.75	240	N	Y
FORMO MARY M LIVING TRUST	A HOME DOCTOR INC	\$448,486	56 ARLINGTON PL	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
AGUILAR ARROYO JOSE M ETAL	IRON BACK MIKE LLC	\$443,000	14 LAVON LN	MALAGA	1348	2024	3	2	362.5	N	N
PORT CASANDRA S & SAFFLE MAXWELL T	PAGEL MELLANY	\$440,000	12131 CHUMSTICK HWY	LEAVENWORTH	1146	1955	1	.75	784	N	N
SHABAN HASSAN & STOCKTON LACY	RINCON INVESTMENTS LLC	\$439,900	1226 MONTANA ST	WENATCHEE	1506	1952		1	0	N	N
HARRISON ASHLEY & CASEY	FREEBURG JASON	\$439,900	3163 BERMUDA ST	MALAGA	1736	1986	4	2.5	644	N	Y

Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County December 2024

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
NASH SUSAN M	PUYEAR HOWARD S & M TERESA	\$427,400	1806 HERITAGE DR	WENATCHEE	2304	2007			480	N	N
KEYSER FAMILY TRUST ETAL	KEYSER GIFT TRUST	\$425,000	12661 SHORE ST	LEAVENWORTH	2056	2011	3	3.5	1518	N	Y
TULE RIVER HOMEBUYER EARNED EQUITY AGENCY LLC	BRYANT BEAU & ANNA	\$420,000	1234 7TH ST	WENATCHEE	957	1953	2	1	252	N	Y
DAVIS AARON & BRITTNEY	EIDER PROPERTIES LLC	\$418,000	1030 FINCH LN	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N
HENDRICKS JEREMY C	LEWMAN HOLDINGS LLC	\$407,200	1309 2ND ST	WENATCHEE	1177	1952	3	1	315	N	Y
JOHNSON CRAIG M	JOHNSON CHARLOTTE S REVOCABLE TRUST	\$400,000	162 QUAIL RUN	WENATCHEE	1134	0			0	N	N
BARBER CHASSITY & STANICH CLAYTON	SMITH STEPHEN H & WHITNEY R	\$388,000	8784 SCHOOL ST	DRYDEN	1192	2006	3	2	0	N	N
SMITH ANDREW C & MARIA A	TAYLOR MICHAEL S & TIFFANY L	\$385,000	263 LILLY LN	WENATCHEE	2870	2009	4	3.5	792	N	N
RAMOS CORTEZ LUIS & BARRERA SOSA MARIA J	NOYES GARY E & SHEREE I	\$385,000	1343 MAPLE ST	WENATCHEE	816	1946	1	1	484	N	N
GRAHAM SUNSHINE & STRATTON TREVOR	HOWE JOHN C & MARITA L	\$384,900	116 S DOUGLAS ST	CASHMERE	823	1906	2	1	0	N	Y
PIPER RODNEY L	PIPER RANDY E & NANCY L	\$380,000	UNASSIGNED	PESHASTIN	0	0			0	N	N
HOME RUN TEAM LLC	MARTIN MARGARET A	\$380,000	229 SUN VALLEY DR	WENATCHEE	2296	2013		2.5	936	N	Y
ROBERTSON MATTHEW	BURTS MARTHA J	\$379,900	1020 N ELLIOTT AVE	WENATCHEE	1172	1959	3	1	0	N	Y
SANDERS JAMES ETAL	MILLOY LYNN ETAL	\$367,500	34190 STEVENS RD	STEVENS PASS	912	1970	2	1	0	N	Y
WOODS WICKIUP LLC	MICHAEL JOHN W ETAL	\$359,000	15481 CEDAR BRAE RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	532	1954			0	N	N
BOLAN KATIE M & CAMERON C	ESCALERA KATHRYN L	\$355,000	19 S CLEVELAND AVE	WENATCHEE	912	1906	2	1	432	N	Y

Building Supply

Continued from page 1

not doing well and they asked the La Mars to buy it. So the La Mars bought a second lumber yard and that became their Chelan location. That store has now moved into the old Valley Tractor building near Chelan Falls.

However there were hard times, too. In 1992, La Mar’s mother, Sharon, was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and given a bleak prognosis. Edd told his son ‘if you’re ever going to come back, now is the time.’

At first he was a little reluctant to come back. He was newly married, had a promising career and his wife had just started a teaching job with a premier school district in Seattle.

“At the time, I was very reluctant, but I would not change a thing,” he said. “It’s probably the best decision I’ve ever made.”

“So I had the opportunity to run the family business side by side with my mom and dad, which is not a thing you see very much anymore,” La Mar said. “So really, a great opportunity.”

Sharon sought a second opinion and decided to pursue alternative treatment for her cancer and lived another 17 years.

“My wife and I raised

our kids here,” he said. “She was a school teacher. Then, unfortunately, she also came down with cancer, and my mom passed in 2009, my wife passed in 2011 both of cancer. But I remarried and adopted my wife’s son and we raised our three kids here in town.”

“Then my dad passed and it went from, you know, my mom and dad and I running the business together, to my dad and I running the business together to me running the business by myself,” he said.

La Mar asked his children if they had any interest in coming home to help run the store but they all had their own ambitions. That helped him to know the direction he wanted to go with the business.

He was approached by TAL Holdings known as TAL Building Centers, a family-owned business out of Vancouver, Wash. The company was looking to expand and had recently bought the Marson and Marson stores in Leavenworth, Wenatchee and a few other locations in Northwest Washington.

TAL had approached La Mar’s father previously but the timing wasn’t right then. This was actually the third time they had approached La Mar. This time he decided he should listen to what they



had to say. He knew there was only a small group of people who would actually be able to purchase and successfully run a lumberyard.

He liked that they are family owned and that they would keep him and all of his employees.

“I was 52 and really was not looking to do something else, but I also knew the opportunity of them purchasing us was not going to come around many more times,” he said.

“I just like the way everything lined up,” he said. “I liked the idea that all my employees got to stay and had opportunities inside of this new company that I could never give them.”

La Mar did not have the resources of his parents to help shoulder the responsibility anymore.

“The exposure and the risk that we were taking as a family was getting very large, with upwards to 40

employees and a million dollars in inventory, it just kind of got a little scary,” he said. “It’s like, wow, if you wreck this ship it’s gonna mess up a lot of people’s lives. And I just thought, you know what, this may be the time for me to hitch our trailer to a much larger vessel, with larger resources that can take this thing to the next level, and I can be a part of that.”

La Mar works in upper management for TAL Holdings and still owns the property.

La Mar shared that TAL Holdings is committed to preserving the legacy of the stores they acquire, avoiding rebranding or drastic changes. Instead, they’ve leveraged their network of 31 stores, providing greater buying power, resources, and access to vendors, allowing the business to grow in ways he couldn’t have achieved on his own.

That commitment to the community and customers is what has kept the business strong for 46 years.

The business recognized early on that competing on price alone against major retailers like Home Depot, Lowe’s, or large lumber yards like Builders First-Source was unrealistic. Instead, they focused on other strengths, understanding they couldn’t match the scale of billion-

dollar companies.

“But the thing we thought we could do was we could customize our service and our quality to meet the expectations of our customers, and so that’s what we went to bat with,” he said. “We knew we had to be competitive.”

They knew they couldn’t be overly expensive or no one would buy from them. But they also knew they could offer quicker deliveries and other services that larger companies couldn’t justify financially. They prioritized a friendly staff and ensured they had the products customers needed when they needed them, La Mar said.

“I mean, really honestly, running a lumberyard isn’t brain surgery or rocket science, pretty simple stuff,” he said. “Get up every day. Have the product, do what you said you’re gonna do, and just every day, rinse, wash, repeat. Yeah, that sounds easy on paper, but to actually execute it takes a lot of dedication and tenacity and focus.”

Lake Chelan Building Supply wants to continue to be a part of the community for a long time. For La Mar that means contributing to the community with action, not just words, and living it every day.

“Our family appreciates this valley,” he said. “I stayed here in the valley because I immersed myself

so far in this community that I’m not sure I’m ever gonna leave.”

Even though La Mar and his family are not technically running a business anymore they are still ingrained in the community and want to see TAL Building Centers succeed because it’s good for the community and their family name and legacy are still tied to the business.

TAL Building Centers and the La Mar family were big donors to the community center as they want to see it succeed. They align on their desire to support and be a part of the community.

“When my mom was going through her cancer treatment, when my wife was going through her cancer treatment, community surrounded us, and we very much felt loved and (the community) mourned with us when they passed,” he said.

“I’m just so happy to have made the choice that I made back in the day, and I’m so glad my mom and dad decided to do what they did, even though it seemed to be a little bit against the odds,” he said. “It’s created a good story and a lot of great memories for our community and for our family.”

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# Real Estate

## Existing home sales rose 2.2% in December, marking strong end to challenging year

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Existing home sales increased 2.2% in December to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.24 million units, the National Association of Realtors reported Wednesday.

The December sales pace marked the strongest showing since February 2024 and represented a 9.3% increase from the previous year.

Despite the year-end surge, 2024's total existing home sales fell to 4.06 million units, the lowest annual level since 1995.

The median home price reached a record high of \$407,500 for the year.

"Home sales in the fi-

nal months of the year showed solid recovery despite elevated mortgage rates," said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun.

"Home sales during the winter are typically softer than the spring and summer, but momentum is rising with sales climbing year-over-year for three straight months."

The median existing home price in December was \$404,400, up 6.0% from December 2023.

The price increase reflected stronger activity in luxury markets, with sales of homes priced above \$1 million jumping 35% year-over-year while

sales declined for properties under \$250,000.

Housing inventory tightened considerably, dropping 13.5% from November to 1.15 million units, though remaining 16.2% higher than December 2023.

At the current sales pace, this represents a 3.3-month supply.

First-time buyers comprised 31% of December purchases, showing a slight increase from November's 30%.

Cash transactions accounted for 28% of sales, up from 25% in November but down from 29% the previous year.

The 30-year fixed mort-

Regional variations

The housing market showed mixed performance across regions in December, with three of four major regions recording month-over-month gains. The West posted the strongest year-over-year improvement at 12.9%, while the Midwest experienced a slight decline. All regions saw median price increases, with the Northeast leading at 11.8% year-over-year growth.

**Midwest**  
Sales declined 1.0% to an annual rate of 990,000, but remained up 6.5% from prior year.  
Median price: \$298,600, up 9.0% from December 2023.

**South**  
Sales rose 3.2% from November to an annual rate of 1.93 million, up 9.0% year-over-year.  
Median price: \$361,800, up 3.4% from previous year.

**West**  
Sales increased 2.6% to an annual rate of 790,000, up 12.9% from a year ago.  
Median price: \$614,500, up 6.0% from December 2023.

**Northeast**  
Sales increased 3.9% from November to an annual rate of 530,000, up 10.4% from December 2023.  
Median price: \$478,900, up 11.8% from last year.

gage rate averaged 6.96% as of January 23, according to Freddie Mac, down from 7.04% the previous week but higher than the 6.69% rate recorded one year ago.

Single-family home sales increased 1.9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.83 million, while condominium and co-op sales rose 5.1% to 410,000 units.



## Housing market soars in Chelan-Douglas while nation slumps

Brian Fair & Yaneli Perez  
Pioneer Title Company



While U.S. home sales hit a 30-year low in 2024, the Chelan-Douglas region tells a different story.

Local sales surged 11.7% by volume and 25.6% in dollar terms, defying the national

downward trend of 0.7%.

The luxury segment led this charge.

A remarkable 165 homes sold for over \$1 million, nearly doubling 2023's count of 93.

Financed transactions jumped \$151 million, marking a 29.5% in-

crease.

This robust performance spans virtually all price ranges, save for properties under \$250,000.

Price per square foot data shows steady appreciation across segments, suggesting sustained

market strength despite the challenging interest rate environment.

Market watchers might have expected the Federal Reserve's aggressive rate hikes to cool local demand. Instead, buyers appear to have adapted.

The initial shock of

higher borrowing costs has faded, replaced by a pragmatic acceptance of the new normal.

The tug of war between higher interest rates and a shortage of housing supply will shape the market in 2025.

This supply-demand

imbalance could intensify price pressures, particularly if inventory remains constrained.

For now, though, the Chelan-Douglas market stands as a testament to regional resilience in the face of national headwinds.

### Sustainable

Continued from page 4

- improvement.
- Track weekly waste volume: Measure the amount of waste diverted to composting each week to see how much you're reducing overall waste.
  - Calculate cost savings: Compare waste disposal costs before and after implementing composting to gauge any financial benefits.
  - Gather staff feedback: Regularly check in with your team to learn what's working and where they may need additional support.
  - Celebrate milestones and improvements: Recognize the efforts of your staff and celebrate milestones as your program matures. This helps create a sense of ownership and pride among employees.

**The broader impact**

Adopting composting can make a significant impact on the environment. Commercial composting reduces greenhouse gas emissions by diverting organic waste from landfills, which are major contributors to methane emissions. As we've discussed in previous articles, composting also supports local agricultural ecosystems by providing rich, fertile soil for farms, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. It

also demonstrates your commitment to corporate environmental responsibility, enhancing your restaurant's brand image and attracting a growing number of eco-conscious customers.

Winton Manufacturing Compost Works can help develop a comprehensive composting plan tailored to your needs. Their trained team will guide you through each stage of implementation— from staff training to waste diversion strategies — ensuring that your restaurant operates as efficiently and sustainably as possible. Contact Winton Manufacturing Compost Works today and begin your journey to sustainability.

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# Career & Workplace

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## Understanding FLSA classification & Washington minimum wage act (WMWA)

Understanding the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Washington's Minimum Wage Act (WMWA) is crucial for both employers and employees.

The FLSA sets national standards for minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and youth employment standards.

While these federal regulations establish a baseline, individual states can introduce additional standards.

Did you know that Washington State has higher standards than the FLSA and requires duties tests to determine classification?

### What is FLSA classification?

All positions within the USA default to an hourly pay structure, which is referred to as "non-exempt" as those positions are subject to the FLSA rules.

Non-exempt employees are entitled to minimum wage and overtime pay - 1.5 times their regular rates for hours worked beyond 40 in a workweek.

The FLSA allows posi-

tions to be exempt from the FLSA rules if the position passes three (3) tests: job duties, paid a salary or fee, and pay is above the salary threshold.

Employees in an exempt position are generally not entitled to overtime pay. Exempt positions usually fall into one of the following categories: executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, and computer professionals.

### Washington State differences

While adhering to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Washington has specific distinctions that may influence employee classification.

First, the state's minimum salary requirements for exempt employees are higher than the federal threshold.

For small employers with 1 to 50 employees, the 2025 weekly salary threshold is \$1,332.80, which equates to an annual salary threshold of \$69,305.60.

Conversely, large employers with 51 or more employees face a higher weekly threshold of



STOCK PHOTO

\$1,499.40, resulting in an annual salary threshold of \$77,968.80. In

comparison, the federal minimum salary is set at \$684 per week, or approximately \$35,568 annually. It is important to note that computer professionals have a different salary threshold amount.

In Washington, the salary threshold is applied to total compensation rather than just base pay.

Additionally, to qualify for the exemption, salaried employees must meet two additional tests: the salary basis test and the job duties test, which only considers the position duties actually performed.

It's important to note that different categories, such as executive, administrative, professional, and

computer professionals, each have their own specific duties analysis for exemption criteria.

Moreover, certain professions in Washington, such as retail and specific healthcare positions, have established particular exemptions and varying rules.

These nuances require employers in these sectors to remain vigilant and monitor any state-level changes that may impact their compliance.

### Looking ahead

Understanding FLSA classification, particularly within the context of Washington state, is vital for compliance and employee rights. Washington State threshold amounts adjust annually with a projected annual threshold of \$93,340.00 for both small and large employers by January 1, 2028.

Employers should regularly evaluate employee job descriptions, duties, and salary levels, and remain updated on both federal and state standards. Where differences exist between Washington State and federal overtime rules, the employer must follow the rule that is most favorable to the worker.

### Intro to Back40 advisors:

At Back40 Advisors, we

are dedicated to helping organizations optimize their people strategies and back-office operations. With dual expertise in accounting and HR leadership, we are able to approach organizational challenges with a holistic perspective, understanding both the human capital and financial implications of strategic decisions. As HR Consultants, our goal is to continue this trajectory, innovating in the HR space and driving strategic growth that aligns with the evolving needs of the workplace. See more at [www.back40advisors.com](http://www.back40advisors.com).

Colleen Malmassari, a Society for Human Resource Management-Certified Professional, Professional in Human Resources, is the founder of Back40 Advisors LLC.

## Washington unemployment drops to 4.5% as state adds 11,800 jobs

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Washington state's unemployment rate dropped to 4.5% in December as employers added 11,800 jobs.

The employment gains marked a strong finish to 2024, with construction and leisure sectors leading the growth.

The December unemployment rate fell from 4.6% in November and represents the lowest level recorded in 2024, according to the state Employment Security Department.

"Washington's labor economy finished 2024 strong," said Anneliese Vance-Sherman, chief labor economist for the Employment Security Department. "The unemployment rate dropped to the lowest rate on record during the calendar year. The only two months

with higher job gains in 2024 were in February and November."

Construction added 4,000 jobs, with specialty trade contractors gaining 2,400 positions and residential building construction adding 1,700. The leisure and hospitality sector grew by 2,900 jobs, primarily in accommodation and food services.

Manufacturing saw the largest decline, shedding 1,600 jobs, with 900 losses concentrated in aerospace products and parts manufacturing. Retail trade and government each decreased by 200 jobs.

Over the past year, Washington added 30,600 jobs, reflecting a 0.9% increase.

The private sector grew by 0.4% while public

sector employment increased by 3.0%.

The state paid unemployment benefits to 70,120 people in December, up 7,444 from November. The increase was primarily driven by claims from construction, agriculture, and administrative support sectors.

Washington's unemployment rate remains higher than the national rate, which decreased to 4.1% in December from 4.2% in November. The state's December 2024 rate of 4.5% was also higher than its December 2023 rate of 4.2%.

The Seattle/Bellevue/Everett region saw its unemployed population decrease from 76,188 to 73,151 between November and December, while its labor force grew by 12,013 workers.

### Student Summit

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eating a bird for a rare winter meal, or identifying a rare mountain beaver scurry across the path.

After reviewing the footage, the classes jump on the school bus and head to one of the camera sites to collect a memory card and change the batteries.

During the hike out, students make observations about their current environment, and speculate how the wildlife might be reacting.

"It makes it feel real, right? So often stuff like this is theoretical, like, 'This is what scientists do in the world.' But we're actually out doing it with these kids," said Layton.

In preparation for the summit, the fourth graders put together a presentation of their findings, accompanied by a posterboard of the animals they have observed.

"[I hope they see] what's possible. With a little bit of initiative and imagination and some flexibility from administrators, you know, like you can do some cool stuff," said Layton.

After presenting, students heard from a panel representing state agencies focused on education and environmental issues, including the Office of Native Education, OSPI,



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA  
Wenatchee High School's Earth Club partnered with the composting facility, Winton Manufacturing Compost Works, to divert the school's food waste from going into the landfill.

Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife.

This is Indian Country, and Thurston Conservation District.

They also had the opportunity to visit the Cap-

itol building and meet with legislators from their respective communities.

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# Healthcare

## Confluence Health adds new security dog

**Patients and visitors to Confluence Health Hospital’s Central and Mares campuses soon might see the newest member of the Confluence Health staff on duty, and this staff member wears a fur coat rather than scrubs.**

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

A part of the newly launched security dog program at Confluence Health, Atlas – a male 3-year-old German Shepard originally from Slovakia in Eastern Europe – and his handler, Justin Bennett, recently returned to the Wenatchee area after completing their extensive training. The four-legged addition to the security team is one of two dogs planned, with the second dog and handler arriving later in the year. “Like programs at healthcare facilities around the country, our new security dog program features animalsthat are rigorously trained along with their specially selected handlers to help make Confluence Health patients and visitors, as well as staff and providers, feel safe,” commented John Urdahl, security and emergency preparedness director at Confluence Health. “While trained for a

wide range of situations, the dogs’ primary roles will be to deter violent behavior by assisting their human counterparts in their rounds in the various facilities.” Though they are working dogs, rather than pets, and their primary role is in assisting security, these new canine officers also love to interact with and visit staff and visitors while performing their duties, though dog-lovers should always be sure to ask the handler first before interacting with the security dog so as to not interfere with their work. “Atlas is a real sweetheart to me and everyone he meets,” commented Bennett, Confluence Health’s first security team K9 handler. “Like most working dogs, he lives with me when not on duty and he has shown himself to have a really goofy and fun personality when not on the clock. In particular, he loves to run and

explore new smells, like most dogs.” Bennett himself is also new to the Confluence Health team, having been born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. Growing up with dogs as a kid, he moved to Chicago after going to two of the top dog trainer schools in the country and later served as a training director for another dog training facility. Following this, Bennett then worked as an explosive detection K9 handler for the United States Department of Energy at both the Y-12 National Security Complex in Tennessee near the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and then at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, protecting the nation’s nuclear stockpile. In addition to his canine co-worker, Bennett also has another dog at home named Maple. Along with the money provided by Confluence Health for the handlers’ positions, the Confluence



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONFLUENCE HEALTH

Health Foundation contributed significant funding to help secure the dogs, their training, and the necessary vehicles for this new program. “The Confluence Health Foundation works each day to enhance and support Confluence Health’s ability to provide safe and superior healthcare close to home,” explained Suzanne Carté-Cocroft, vice president of philanthropy at Confluence Health. “Because of its important focus on staff and patient safety, we knew this was an important program to be a part of and it had enthusiastic support from our board.” In thanks for their contribution, the security team offered to allow the Confluence Health Foun-

dation to select the name for the new four-legged member. The Foundation Board, in turn, reached out to Confluence Health staff and providers to help narrow down the list of names from those provided by the security officers, conducting an organization-wide vote held at the beginning of this year. “We were so excited to see the engagement and enthusiasm from the staff,” continued Carté-Cocroft. “Staff and providers could vote for up to five of the 10 possible names. After 2202 votes cast by 930 people, the name ‘Atlas’ was the clear winner. Ultimately, the board wholeheartedly agreed with the staff choice and

we’re all looking forward to meeting Atlas when he arrives.” “We are excited to start up this new canine security program at Confluence Health,” remarked Dr. Andrew Jones, CEO of Confluence Health. “I have seen similar programs around the country and have witnessed the amazing benefits this brings, not only to the safety of patients and staff, but also in the joy it brings when the security dog visits on their rounds. These canine officers build community, as well as protecting it, and we’re looking forward to Atlas joining our team to help us in continuing to better serve and care for all the residents of North Central Washington.”

## CVCH expands behavioral health services with new East Wenatchee clinic

Columbia Valley Community Health (CVCH) announced Tuesday it will open a new behavioral health clinic in East Wenatchee to expand mental health services in Chelan and Douglas counties. The facility, located at 980 Eastmont Ave., will begin operations in two phases: February 10 for children’s behavioral health services, followed by adult services on February 17.

The clinic has space for up to 29 behavioral health providers. “We are excited to expand our mental health services and provide crucial support for all of Chelan and Douglas counties,” said Manuel Navarro, CEO of CVCH. The new state-of-the-art facility will offer comprehensive mental health treatments and interventions, with specialized services for both adult patients and children requiring behavioral health

support. Mental health organizations across the country have reported growing demand for services in recent years. CVCH officials confirmed the clinic is currently accepting new patients. Community members seeking services can access additional information through the organization’s website or contact the clinic directly at (509) 662-6000 for appointment scheduling.



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### Cybersecurity

Continued from page 2

ing the NIST Cybersecurity Framework.

Participants will also explore top cybersecurity roles, required skills, salaries, and educational pathways.

Additionally, the workshop will highlight extracurricular opportunities and scholarships available to students interested in this field.

STEM clock hours will be provided for educators who attend.

“We are excited to bring this opportunity and important information to schools, educators and counselors,” said Tami McBride, Career Connect Learning Specialist at NCESD.

“Cybersecurity is a rapidly growing field, and we want students to understand the wide range of career opportunities in cybersecurity and recognize that the skills they develop can be applied to any field

they choose to pursue.

By sharing these resources with educators, we can support students in discovering and pursuing promising career paths.”

### The Role of Schools and Counselors

Schools play a pivotal role in preparing the next generation of cyber defenders.

By participating in events like the Cybersecurity Career Advisor Workshop, educators can better understand the diverse opportunities available in cybersecurity and how to guide students toward these lucrative and impactful careers.

The workshop’s hands-on approach, featuring online tools for job searches and resources for students, aims to bridge the gap between education and industry needs.

Dr. Kristine Christensen, a professor of Computer Information Systems and a presenter at the event, will provide valuable insights into aligning academic

pathways with real-world cybersecurity demands.

### Building a Resilient Future

For rural communities in North Central Washington and beyond, fostering a robust cybersecurity talent pipeline is critical to ensuring economic resilience and growth.

By integrating cybersecurity education into career planning, regional partners are not only addressing current workforce shortages but also preparing for the future of work in an increasingly digital world.

Counselors and educators interested in attending the workshop can register now to learn how to inspire the next generation of cybersecurity professionals.

As industries evolve and technology advances, cybersecurity skills will continue to be a cornerstone of innovation and security across all fields.

Register to attend the workshop here: <https://ncwtech.info/cyberpath>

*of Ward Media and the co-owner of Apple Capital Marketing & Northwest Swag Works. She can be reached at [amy@ward.media](mailto:amy@ward.media).*

### Carl Florea

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### Leavenworth in the near future?

Since I was elected, I have been working with the state legislature to pass a funding stream that is significant enough that we can apply it to housing and end the pushing of our workforce out of our community.

This would be healthier for our businesses, for the environment, and for our visitors who love to come because we still have a community base here to welcome them.

If I can get approval from the state to add some kind of funding stream, such as an additional lodging tax, that would be paid by our city’s guests, we could use those tax dollars to keep our small city a diverse community. I would gladly pass the torch to the next mayor to carry out the implementation of that funding stream.

### Travel agency

Continued from page 6

plained.

The agency offers assistance via text, email, and phone, with fees based on

### Who or what inspires you?

There have been a number of teachers and mentors to whom I am indebted. But none had more impact on me than my mom, whose name was Grace, and who embodied that name in how she treated not only me, but everyone.

Failure in her eyes was never an end, and never what defined the person, but an opportunity to try again. Her life pointed me to Christ, and it is Jesus who has provided me with my ultimate inspiration to treat all people as children of God and worthy of love.

It is also what led me to work with people who are often forced to the fringes of society and struggle with situations that can rob them of their personal power and dignity.

### What do you like to do with your free time?

I grew up in a big card

playing family, and with our children we added board games as well, so we still try to get those in when we gather. I also like to read, ride my bike, and cross-country ski.

### Is there anything else you want our readers to know?

Each week I invite people to come and have a coffee beverage with me on a Monday morning, or a cold beer on a Monday evening, this is a casual “GYOB (grab your own beverage)” style meet-up so something else entirely is just fine, too.

Anyone is welcome to come and talk about anything that is on their mind concerning the city.

The times and places for these can be found on the City’s online calendar located on our website at [www.cityofleavenworth.com](http://www.cityofleavenworth.com).

*Quinn Propst: 509-731-3590 or [quinn@ward.media](mailto:quinn@ward.media)*

### Marketing

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*Amy Yaley is the COO*

previous experience at Deep Water Electronics, where he designed custom entertainment systems, applying a similar personalized approach to travel planning.

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