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New home and garden boutique offers curated goods, workshops and design services

Alpenglō Living, a home and garden boutique that offers curated goods, workshops, and design services, opened its doors in downtown Leavenworth on Feb. 21.

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

Alpenglō Living was inspired by the fleeting nature of alpenglow, where the sun hit the mountains just right, and they glow pink and red for a moment. “It’s this time of day that just comes in like the blink of an eye... It makes you pause and just enjoy the beauty of nature and the mountains,” said co-owner Bri Davey.

For Davey and co-owner Hannah Dewey, the two intend to recreate that moment of pause and enjoyment through their goods and services. The retail space is a collection of curated, heirloom quality goods “that inspire and delight” while maintaining functionality. The collection includes handmade goods created by local artisans, as well as Dewey’s nature pho-



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

Owners Bri Davey and Hannah Dewey stand beside the boutique’s long tables, which are intended to create a gathering space for connection and creativity.

tography and Dewey’s graphic design. “We’re trying to bring all the things that we love, like in our own lives, to our community and just offer something that’s

different but still approachable,” said Davey. As two creatives, the friends were inspired to create their

See **ALPENGLÖ LIVING** Page 16

In Downtown Wenatchee, a hidden gem of a store turns tragedy into triumph



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA

Jewelry, belts, hats, and more accessories run along the counter beside the cash register. **SEE STORY PAGE 15**

Serve Wenatchee is a business that’s all about heart

Tucked away in the bottom level of the Midtown Building at the corner of Wenatchee and Orondo Avenues is a business you may never have a reason to go into yourself.

By **ANDREW SIMPSON** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

But if you do, you’ll quickly find out why Serve Wenatchee Valley is still a bustle of people coming and going all day. That’s because Serve Wenatchee isn’t your ordinary business. No money changes hands inside their doors. The exchange is grace for gratitude. That’s not to say there’s no mission at Serve Wenatchee. Their main aim is preventing

homelessness, and they do it in a way that’s both multipurpose and ingenious: Multipurpose because their services provide immediate tangible benefits like food and clothing, and ingenious because they recognize that when one or more things are already taken care of — or at least helped with — it frees up resources for the person

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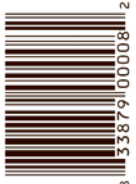
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Heart of Business

Community Service and Resilience in North Central Washington

By **Terry Ward** | CEO and Publisher Ward Media

This month's stories reveal how businesses across the region are making profound impacts through service and resilience, demonstrating that success can be measured in more than just financial transactions.

Serve Wenatchee Valley exemplifies how an organization can function as both a vital service and a thriving business.

Operating from the Midtown Building, their Fresh Hope Market transforms the traditional food bank model into something that preserves dignity through choice.

By allowing families to "shop" with points rather than simply receiving pre-selected items, they provide both nourishment and respect.

Their ingenious approach addresses multiple needs simultaneously – when food security is established, resources can be directed toward housing stability, preventing homelessness in our

community.

The extensive network of partnerships Serve Wenatchee maintains – from local grocery stores to churches and other outreach programs – mirrors the interconnected business ecosystem that strengthens our entire valley.

As Operations Manager Shelley Monda notes, with potential reductions in federal funding, their privately supported model becomes even more crucial.

Their story reminds us that successful businesses build community resilience, whether through direct profit or community service.

Meanwhile, Liliana's Fashion Boutique demonstrates how personal tragedy can transform into renewed purpose.

Owner Joaquin Granados' story is one of remarkable adaptation following the heartbreaking loss of his wife Liliana to cancer in April 2024.

Rather than closing

shop, Joaquin is expanding – renovating the space, planning to reintroduce salon services, and continuing to serve the Hispanic and Latino communities with specialized cultural merchandise from quinceañera dresses to traditional wedding attire.

Joaquin's commitment echoes the same themes we see in our other featured businesses this month.

Alpenglö Living brings two creative entrepreneurs together to offer not just products but moments of connection through workshops and community events.

The Riverwalk Park Inn's new ownership demonstrates how thoughtful renovation can honor a property's legacy while embracing innovation.

These stories highlight a common thread in our region's most successful enterprises – they understand that business is fundamentally about relationships.

From the Publisher



Whether it's Serve Wenatchee creating shopping experiences that preserve dignity, Joaquin Granados maintaining connections with long-time customers who travel from as far as Omak, or Alpenglö's owners creating gathering spaces for shared learning, these businesses recognize that genuine human connection creates lasting value.

As we navigate economic uncertainties, these examples remind us that North Central Washington's business strength lies in our ability to serve authentic needs while adapting to changing circumstances.

The businesses that survive and thrive will be those that, like Serve Wenatchee and Liliana's Boutique, combine clear mission with community connection, creating enterprises that nourish both the economy and the human spirit.

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.

Data Centers fuel digital frontiers and economic growth in North Central Washington

Imagine walking into a grocery store and picking up an apple without ever considering the vast agricultural network behind it – farmers, irrigation, storage, and distribution.

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

In many ways, the conversation around technology advancements, cloud computing services and artificial intelligence without a conversation about data centers mirrors this perspective.

Washington state is well positioned to maintain the considerable technology sector demand with no signs of slowing down any time soon, but not without recognizing the critical role data centers have in sustaining this technological advancement.

In February 2025, Governor Ferguson called for a task force to evaluate the

economic impact of data centers across Washington State, including a closer look at their influence in rural North Central Washington.

This assessment will

consider the local transformation that began in 2006 when Yahoo opened the region's first data center and has continued with steady construction and development of data cen-

ter sites for industry leaders like Microsoft, Sabey, Vantage, and NTT and others.

These companies were drawn to the area for good reason – the accessible land, stable and clean energy, low natural disaster risk, a robust fiber network, and access to a skilled local workforce are all strategic advantages.

In return, rural communities in Grant County like Quincy have enjoyed considerable community benefit through direct community engagement investments and sizable contributions to the tax

revenues that further fund essential community services like libraries, schools and other public facilities.

In 2022, the Washington Technology Industry Association reported that rural data center operations generated approximately \$158 million in annual economic output and supported around \$70 million in wages and benefits. These figures translate into an economic lift with access to family-sustaining employment and long-term community prosperity.

See **DATA CENTERS** Page 3



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Finance

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Contributor for Ward Media



Long-term care planning starts with financial planning, not trusts

Often, folks want to protect hard earned assets from the costs of health-care as they age. They fear expensive assisted living and nursing home care costs.

Though the fears are well founded, the first step is to understand the exact potential costs... or the costs as close as actuarially determinable. With an understanding of out-of-pocket costs, the savvy consumer is then better prepared to determine the nature and extent of planning strategies that might be necessary. Before fancy trusts and gifting, before engaging attorneys, before buying insurance... put pen to paper to determine if your financial plan can sustain the cost.

The planning strategies available to address long-term care costs center on either qualifying for Med-



icaid (a government program that provides free or low-cost health coverage to low-income individuals) sooner or protecting assets from being used for care or both. But these strategies also come with trade-offs and might be at odds with other goals. For example, a strategy that works to protect assets from health care costs might increase income tax exposure. Which is more important – taxes or health care costs? We need to put some math behind the question to come up

with an answer and that is accomplished through financial planning. For many clients with higher income or assets, long-term care planning often takes a backseat to tax planning.

It's important to recognize that the strategies available can have a cost to set up, a cost to administer, and they largely benefit the heirs. On the last point, if a parent is trying to preserve the assets of the estate, he or she is doing it to increase the children's inheritance... not neces-

sarily to keep any money in the parent's pocketbook.

Trusts might help but they can be costly and an administrative hassle (again a trade-off). Financial planning tells us with some degree of certainty the need for trusts or other advanced Medicaid planning to more quickly qualify for government assistance. So, let's look to financial planning.

What is the cost of care? To understand the total cost of care, the financial plan must use some inputs on the cost of care per month and the length of care. Different publications report costs and timeframes differently. According to the Genworth 2023 Cost of Care Survey, the national average for assisted living is \$5,350 per month and slightly higher for Washington State at \$6,138 per month. The specific location in Wash-

ington also matters as facilities in King County, for example, generally charge more than facilities in eastern Washington. If nursing care is required, the monthly average national cost almost doubles to \$9,733 for a private room.

One study in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society from 2010 found that the mean stay in a nursing home for older adults was 13.7 months, but the median stay was just 5 months (recognizing that a relatively small number of people had long lengths of stay skewing the mean). The National Center for Health Statistics pegs the average at 485 days, according to a 2019 publication.

Of course, there are different levels of care and both paid and unpaid (e.g. family) care services that one might use. A financial

plan can customize the inputs as desired, but let's peg the potential cost at \$8,000 a month and the timeframe at two years. That is \$96,000 a year for two years. It is large sum of money, to be sure. But what then are the assumptions regarding income and assets?

Any monthly cost should be taken against income to result in the net monthly need. Assume, for example, a person has social security of \$2,500 a month and a pension or an IRA Required Minimum Distribution of \$2,500 a month for a total income of \$5,000 per month. Then the amount not covered by current income is \$3,000 a month for two years (in our scenario) for a cost exceeding income during the two-year time period of \$72,000.

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Data Centers

Continued from page 2

Despite the evidence and duration of the positive local impacts, the data center industry is not well understood by the general public.

Unlike traditional industries with well-defined labor structures, the workforce dynamics of data centers are often variable and standard labor market analyses tend to overlook the vast number of jobs tied to these facilities.

National research estimates that while a small data center might employ 10–50 workers, larger centers require hundreds across diverse roles. Positions span from technical specialists, environmental and facilities engineers, and security professionals to business and contract service managers. Furthermore, many large data centers in North Central Washington operate similarly to retail complexes, hosting multiple tenants.

Some hire directly, while others leverage second-party service contracts to manage national workforce placement, complicating job counts further.

Moreover, the industry creates a considerable

number of jobs in related fields.

One national study suggested that for every direct job in a data center, approximately 7.2 additional jobs are created in related industries and service sectors, amplifying the overall impact on regional economic development.

The Apple STEM Network works regionally to ensure that every young person has access to the skills, resources and support that they need to prepare for local, well-paid, in-demand careers.

The Apple STEM Network has been working for the last few years to develop local workforce pathways that allow young people to begin training and certification in local high schools, and transition to community colleges and employer training programs that prepare competitive candidates for employment within the data centers.

The regional network believes that capturing these trends and understanding the data center workforce dynamics is critical.

Network leaders conducted interviews and research earlier this year that revealed thousands of existing data center jobs in the region – with significant gains projected

in the near future.

Building Community Connection Through Regional Data Center Summits

The Apple STEM Network is inviting regional leaders to further explore these trends and foster regional dialogue at two upcoming Data Center Summits:

- Tuesday, April 29, 2025 – Moses Lake 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Big Bend Community College, WEC Building
- Friday, May 2, 2025 – Wenatchee 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Wenatchee Valley College, MET Event Center

Apple STEM Network Director, Holly Bringman shared that she hopes that the summits will “provide answers to critical questions, such as what does it take to power our digital world right here in NCW and offer a unique opportunity for business and industry leaders, educators, workforce experts, and community members to come together and explore the future of this emerging technology industry in our region.”

Community members can register to attend the summit here: <https://ncwtech.info/datacenter2025>.



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Finance

Tyler Kert

Contributor for Ward Media



Worried about stock market volatility? Get these financial basics right first

Over the past month, the market has seen some serious volatility.

The stock market can be a rollercoaster – one day it's up, the next it's down, and headlines love to keep us on edge about potential crashes or economic problems. But before you spend too much time worrying about market performance, make sure that you have a strong financial foundation in place.

Stock market performance is important and does play a role in a long-term financial strategy, but if you don't have the basics in order, there are more important things to be concerned about. Implement the following financial steps, and the markets will take care of themselves.

Pay Off Credit Card Debt

In the investment world,

guarantees are few and far between. But credit card debt does have a guarantee: lost money. If you're carrying a credit card balance while worrying about stock market dips, you're focusing on the wrong numbers.

Most credit cards charge interest rates of 15-25% or more. Even in the best years, your investment returns aren't likely to beat that. Every dollar of credit card interest you avoid by paying down debt is a guaranteed return. Do yourself a favor and take advantage of those guaranteed returns by paying off your credit card debt.

Take Full Advantage of Your 401(k) Match

If your employer offers a 401(k) match and you're not taking full advantage, you're missing out on additional guaranteed returns.

For many years, I've told



STOCK PHOTO

people that it's free money.

However, I've come to realize that a 401(k) match is not completely free. It does come with a price, and that is delayed gratification.

There is an opportunity cost of contributing to your 401(k).

The cost, however, is well worth the reward down the road. By investing in your 401(k) now, you are buying the ability to make future choices – the choice to retire early, the choice to go on that trip, the choice to drive

that car, the choice to give to that cause, and the list goes on.

If your employer offers a 4% dollar-for-dollar match on your contributions, that is a guaranteed 100% return on your investment.

All you have to do is take advantage of it. If you aren't taking advantage of your employer match, you really have no reason to complain or worry about volatility in the markets because you are willingly giving up 100% returns that are available to you.

Have an Investment Plan

It's surprising how many individuals invest without considering the bigger picture of their financial goals and objectives.

After all, if you don't know what you are investing for, how can you know what to invest in?

If you're investing without a game plan, you're more likely to buy when everyone is making money and panic when the market drops.

In other words, you're buying high and selling low. Successful investing isn't about reacting to daily headlines. It's about sticking to a well-structured, long-term strategy.

Inside your financial plan, you will have already considered your goals and your risk tolerance.

If you know that you

can't handle significant market swings, adopt an investment strategy that won't subject you to that. Then you won't be setting yourself up for failure by adopting a strategy that subjects you to unnecessary stress.

There are times, however, when it's more risky to avoid market risk than it is to take it on. If your goals and timeframe require a level of appreciation that you can't find in a money market fund, you'll need to take on some risk.

Ultimately, risk is not a bad thing – it just needs to be managed and matched to each individual according to their needs.

Let the Market Take Care of Itself

Once you've checked off these financial building blocks, market performance

See **TYLER KERT** Page 14



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The Flywheel Conference has put Wenatchee on the map! We've awarded over \$1.5 million to startups and supported 48 companies. Investors and entrepreneurs from across the PNW travel to attend. Last year, 74% of attendees came from outside the area—this year, we hope you will join the excitement in our community!

SPONSORED CONTENT

Turning waste into opportunity

How Winton Manufacturing is transforming organic waste into community growth

From Winton Manufacturing Compost Works

In NCW, a quiet revolution is taking place – one that turns what was once considered waste into a valuable community resource.

Winton Manufacturing, a leader in composting innovation, is reshaping how businesses, institutions, and residents think about organic waste. Through their state-of-the-art composting facility, housed in a repurposed sawmill, Winton Manufacturing is proving that sustainability and economic growth can go hand in hand.

Composting is a Win for Businesses and the Environment

For many businesses, waste disposal is a costly necessity. Traditional waste management often sends organic materials – food

scraps, yard debris, and more – to landfills, where they contribute to methane emissions and take up valuable space. Winton Manufacturing offers a solution that not only diverts waste from landfills but also creates a high-quality soil amendment that benefits local farmers, landscapers, and gardeners.

Restaurants, hotels, hospitals, and schools have partnered with Winton to transform food scraps and organic waste into nutrient-rich compost. Confluence Health, for example, recently implemented a composting program that drastically reduced kitchen waste. “It’s been incredibly rewarding to see our food scraps go back into the ground instead of a landfill,” said Michelle Harris, Food

Services Director at Confluence Health. “The team has embraced the process, and we’re proud to be part of a sustainable solution.”

Strengthening the Local Economy

The impact of composting extends beyond waste reduction – it also fuels economic growth. Winton Manufacturing’s facility provides job opportunities in waste collection, processing, and distribution. Local farmers and orchardists benefit from the availability of high-quality compost, which enhances soil health, reduces water consumption, and minimizes the need for chemical fertilizers. This, in turn, supports agricultural productivity and strengthens the regional economy.

Mia Abbett, CEO of Munchen Haus in Leavenworth, sees composting as both an environmental and economic investment.

See WINTON Page 16

Riverwalk Inn under new ownership, set for renovation

The longtime Riverwalk Inn at the corner of Wapato and Emerson in downtown Chelan has been acquired by a group of investors led by innkeeper Donna Kay, who purchased the property from the Courtney family.

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

The establishment, now renamed Riverwalk Park Inn, will undergo extensive renovations while preserving its existing character, the new owners said.

“We wish to capture a lakeside mood of connection, comfort and natural harmony unique to anything in Chelan,” Kay said.

Plans include a complete renovation of the inn’s 13 guest units, bakery, café, and outdoor seating area. The ownership group is also seeking city approval to add two additional rental units and wellness amenities such as a spa or massage studio on the property.

Ishita Interiors, led by investors Ishita Lalan and her husband Harshad Lalan, will handle the redesign. Ishita Lalan, who operates her interior design firm in Asheville, North Carolina, said the project “will be a labor of love with local motifs.” Her design work has received industry recognition across the United States.

The inn will implement new technological features including 24/7 electronic check-in and key systems.

Existing amenities include free Wi-Fi, satellite television, mini-refrigerators, and microwave ovens in a smoke-free environment with complimentary

street parking. “Our investor group recognizes the challenges ahead for the Riverwalk Park Inn and the realities of making improvements without closing during the construction phase,” Kay said.

“The forecast for the project is exciting to say the least. We are dedicated to reviving the spirit of the

See RIVERWALK Page 14



COURTESY OF TERRY LABRUE
Innkeeper Donna Kay is a new co-owner of the re-named Riverwalk Park Inn in Downtown Chelan. Renovations and upgrade construction start this spring.



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Keeping Up with people

Wenatchee Valley Humane Society hires Director of Veterinary Medical Services

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

The Wenatchee Valley Humane Society has appointed Dr. Rebecca Bozarth as its new Director of Veterinary Medical Services following a two-year search.

Bozarth, who received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine and her undergraduate degree from Washington State University, brings more than 34 years of experience to the position.

"We are so fortunate to have a veterinarian with her depth of experience and knowledge. It is nearly impossible to find someone with a vast background who holds such high standards and has the compassion for our work. We truly won with Dr. Bozarth," stated BJ Andersen, Executive Director.

Andersen added, "It's been nearly 2 years since we had full-time staff to operate the clinic facility that the Greater Wenatchee



Dr. Rebecca Bozarth

Area Community so graciously funded."

Prior to joining WVHS, Bozarth served in various roles including Director of Emergency Services, Medical Director for a high-volume spay and neuter clinic, and an ER relief veterinarian.

The position requires expertise in multiple veterinary disciplines, including surgery, euthanasia, vaccinations, preventive medicine, and dental prophylaxis.

The WVHS veterinary clinic, which opened in 2020, provides services to

income-qualified members of the public while also addressing the medical needs of shelter animals.

According to the organization, Bozarth's immediate priority will be hiring a full-time Licensed Veterinary Technician to complete the clinic's staffing requirements and expand public services.

The clinic has operated without a full-time veterinarian since 2022.

Hiring a full veterinary staff would allow the facility to increase its capacity to serve the Wenatchee Valley region.

Members of the public can meet Dr. Bozarth at the upcoming Pets & People Outdoors Kenzie's Landing Dog Walk on Saturday, April 5, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., where she will deliver an educational presentation on wilderness first aid training for pets.

For more information about the Wenatchee Valley Humane Society's clinic services and upcoming events, visit www.wenatcheehumane.org.

Leavenworth City Clerk earns municipal certification

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

City Clerk Andrea Fischer of Leavenworth has been awarded the Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC).

Fischer, who has served as Leavenworth's City Clerk since August 2022, earned the certification after completing rigorous education requirements and demonstrating a proven record of meaningful contributions to her local government, community, and state.

"Andrea's dedication to her role and commitment to continued professional and personal growth are remarkable," said City Ad-



Andrea Fischer

ministrator Matthew "Selby." "Her achievement as a Certified Municipal Clerk is a moment of pride for the City of Leavenworth. I congratulate her on this significant accomplishment and celebrate the positive impact her professional expertise brings to our city's leadership team and this community."

The IIMC, established as a non-profit corporation in 1947, comprises 14,000 members across the United States, Canada, and 15 other countries. Its primary mission involves promoting educational opportunities and professional development for municipal clerks worldwide.

Lisa Garcia, MMC, President of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, offered her congratulations in a statement: "On behalf of the IIMC Board of Directors, I am honored to endorse the conferring of CMC to Andrea Fischer, CMC of City of Leavenworth. We share your pride in this achievement, and we applaud your support of the role Andrea plays in your city."

City of Leavenworth welcomes new public works employees

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

The City of Leavenworth has added two new employees to its Public Works Department, filling positions in the Utilities and Facilities Maintenance divisions.

David Scott, a Leavenworth native, has joined the city's Utilities Division. Scott is known to spend his free time exploring outdoor activities with his

family, according to city officials.

The Public Works Department also welcomed



Scott - Williams

Jason Williams to its Facilities Maintenance Division. Williams, also a local resident, brings "impressive experience and versatile skill set" to his new role, the city announced.

The city stated in its announcement, "We're thrilled to have both of them on board with the Public Works Department! Be sure to say hello when you spot them around town."



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Serve Wenatchee

Continued from page 1

seeking aid to strive to pay their own way in terms of a place to live.

It sounds like a simple charity, and for all intents and purposes, it is. It's privately funded by local organizations and individuals, it provides its services free of charge, and it's a non-profit.

But behind the scenes, this is very much a business, and it benefits Wenatchee as a whole just the way other businesses do. The intricate network of partnerships that Serve Wenatchee maintains in order to fulfill its mission is extensive, from churches to local businesses to other outreach programs similar to its own. They all refer

people to one another, and Serve Wenatchee, for its part, acts as an information clearinghouse for people looking for resources that Serve may not be able to provide.

The largest and first part of what the organization does is to provide food through its Fresh Hope Market, which is a food bank in name only. What they actually do is quite different from any food bank you might have seen in the past: They operate a real store. Where a standard food bank might look like a series of shelves that donated goods are stored on, from which you get whatever is available at the time you arrive, at the Fresh Hope Market, you shop like it's a grocery store.



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA
Detergent, shampoo, toilet paper and diapers make up just a few of the non-food items available in the Market.



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA
Office & Operations Manager Shelley Monda restocks aisles in a non-uniform shirt that clearly states her mission at this business.

Families who qualify for help do so based on income and family size, and are allotted "points" they can use toward food at the Market. Those points act as currency in the Market.

If you need peanut butter, for example, it costs 3 points. But in the Market, it's not just whatever generic peanut butter is available. They have a full shelf of name-brand stuff, in creamy or extra crunchy, just like the grocery store.

Baby food? Zero points for that. "That's free, because it's for BABIES," Intake and Communications Specialist Kim Cavanaugh explains as she shows us through the store.

The food comes from all kinds of sources. The

larger food bank that the Fresh Hope Market works with is called Second Harvest, and they, in turn, have partnerships with many grocery stores.

The Market here in Wenatchee has in their cold section right now prepared snack packs and some pastries from Safeway, fresh fruit from the Plaza Super Jet, and meats that are frozen immediately when they get them from both stores.

There's not just food at the Market. They also have laundry and dish soap, diapers, shampoo, and other essential items. But the aisles are mostly full of food. Beans, soup, boxed mac and cheese, cereals, juices, sodas, pasta, bread

and even baking supplies are all on display.

The dignity that comes with being able to shop like anyone else goes hand in hand with the personal nature of food itself. Food is vital. Food transcends differences in language, culture, socioeconomic status and politics.

Food is caring for others. And remember, getting your family fed is just the first part of what Serve Wenatchee does: They do it so the families they help won't get evicted from their homes. When your food budget is out of the way, you can spend your money keeping a roof over your head.

There is some worry among Serve Wenatchee's staffers that a surge could be coming of people in need. Shelley Monda, the

Office & Operations Manager, discusses national politics for just a moment, saying "With all the cuts to federal funding in so many areas, we're extra glad to be here, but we hope the donations keep coming in like they have."

The old adage is that "a rising tide lifts all boats," and nowhere can that be seen more plainly than when hard-working families who fall just short of scraping by are given a hand so that they can keep the one thing necessary for staying in their job – staying in their home.

When it comes to fulfilling missions, for Serve Wenatchee, business has been good.

Andrew Simpson:
509-433-7626 or
andrew@ward.media



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA
A "giving tree" displays the names of donors on the leaves. Individual donors, businesses and organizations all contribute.



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MEMBER MESSENGER

"Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business"

APRIL 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

PAGE 1

MORGAN DOBBINS

Membership Manager &
Event Assistant of BNCW



What is Your Willingness to Sacrifice?

The owner is the last stop gate before the success or failure of the business. If the owner is not willing to handle emergencies – whether plunging a toilet, getting out of bed to fix a leak, or canceling a vacation because someone called in sick, they might struggle to keep their business.

As Shon Smith, a local business owner for the past 28 years, puts it, "That is what separates the winners and losers. What is your willingness to sacrifice?"

Nationally, about 60% of restaurants fail in the first year, and 80% close within five years. Going broader, 50% of small businesses survive past five years, and only about 30% make it to 10 years or more.

The Wok About Grill, owned by Smith, has stood since 1997, not only surviving beyond these statistics but expanding and staying successful.

The restaurant remains in its original location in downtown Wenatchee, and Smith has since expanded both in Leavenworth and next door to the Wenatchee location. He connected the 108 Lounge to the Wok About Grill Wenatchee and acquired ownership of the building. However, this level of success did not come without hardship.

Owning a small business is not for the faint of heart, and running a business in Washington presents its own set of challenges. High taxes, a steep cost of living, rising wages, strict regulations, increasing rent, and complex employee requirements all add up to the difficulties.

Additionally, the Washington State legislature



Wok About Grill Facebook Page

The original Wok About Grill location has been downtown Wenatchee since 1997.

meets annually to adjust budgets and policies, requiring business owners to constantly adapt to new regulations that may impact their operations.

The ability to pivot and adjust to is crucial for long-term success. Knowing how to get involved and having your voice heard by your representatives is valuable knowledge.

Communicating your regions and county's difficulties to your elected representatives will equip them with more knowledge to represent you better at the local and state level.

BNCW's Local Business Basics: The Building Blocks

Starting a business is an exciting journey, but success requires careful planning, research, and perseverance. Follow these essential steps to build a sturdy foundation for your business.

1. Dream Big – What are you passionate about? What skills do you excel at? Identify a business idea that aligns with your strengths and meets a need or demand in your region.

2. Develop a Comprehensive Business Plan –

Define your why. Create a mission statement and vision for your Business. For help with a basic business plan, complete the following steps in depth.

3. Do Your Research – Before breaking ground, reach out to your local Community Development department to understand zoning, necessary permits, and the timeline for opening. Proper research can save you time and money down the road.

4. Know Your Market – Who is your ideal customer? Conduct market research to understand your target demographic and develop a marketing plan that effectively reaches and engages them.

5. Set SMART Goals – Success starts with clear, actionable goals. Make sure they are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

6. Hire Wisely - Hiring the right people is crucial. Look for individuals who bring unique strengths to your team, share your work ethic, and understand your industry. A strong team can elevate your business and drive long-term success.

7. Plan Your Finances Well – Financial stability is key in the early years. Shon Smith's recommendation

to surviving the first couple years is to have several months' worth of expenses saved before opening your doors. This financial cushion will help you navigate unexpected challenges and keep your business afloat.

8. Join a Local Association – Like Building NCW! – Get involved in your local business community by joining industry associations

or networking groups. Organizations like Building NCW offer valuable resources, connections, and support to help your business grow. Engage with other local entrepreneurs, expand your network, and build credibility in your industry.

9. Finally Get Gritty: – Beyond preparation, business success requires resilience and determination. The dream of being your own boss comes with sacrifices, but with perseverance, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment, you can push through challenges and turn your vision into reality.

Starting a business is hard work, and sustaining one is even harder. Luckily, hard work is rewarding.

You can work for someone else your whole life, or you can build something incredible and work for yourself and build a legacy.

You know the ingredients now – a whole lot of grit, a solid financial plan, an adaptable business plan, and willingness to make the necessary sacrifices.

With these principles, you can not only surpass the five-year survival mark but also, like Shon Smith, have a thriving business.

Creativity, discipline, determination, and the ability to work hard as well as being financially wise will be what it takes to make your dream come true. Wenatchee was built on small businesses.

Ultimately, success in business is not just about having a great idea or a dream; it's about execution, perseverance, and sacrifice.

The question is not just "Will this work?" but rather, "Are you willing to put in the work? And what are you willing to sacrifice to make your business thrive?"

BNCW HAS A NEW NUMBER

We have updated our Phone system, and we have a **NEW NUMBER!** Please update our contact information in your record



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

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MEMBER MESSENGER

“Driven to Promote and Protect Small Business”

APRIL 2025 ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Out and About – Gala Edition

Being an active part of the community means showing up, supporting local organizations, and celebrating the achievements of those around us.

Recently, two major events brought business leaders, industry professionals, and community members together: **The North Central Washington Association of Realtors (NCWAR) Annual Awards Gala and the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce**

Annual Banquet.

The NCWAR Annual Awards Gala was an evening of recognition and appreciation, highlighting the hard work and dedication of real estate professionals who make a significant impact on the region.

Honoring top performers and industry leaders, the event fostered a spirit of excellence and camaraderie among attendees. Congratulations to Evergreen Home Loans, Cathey Rixey with

Guild Mortgage, Nicole Begin with John L Scott, Casi Tarr with Premiere One Properties, JoAnna Harrison with Coldwell Banker, June Stanaway with Re/MAX, and Tess Hutchison with NCWAR.

Equally significant, the Wenatchee Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet provided a platform for local businesses to connect, reflect on past successes, and look ahead to future opportunities.

With inspiring keynote speakers, networking opportunities, and a celebration of outstanding contributions to the community, the banquet reinforced the strength of Wenatchee’s economic and social fabric.

A big round of applause to Business of the Year, Ole Soul Studio and Non-Profit of the Year, Skillsource.

Attending these events not only deepens connections but also reinforces the importance of supporting local businesses and professionals who help shape our community.

Whether it’s recognizing achievements in real estate or celebrating economic growth, these gatherings



North Central Washington Association of Realtors
Four of the Winners at the NCWAR Annual Awards Gala.

serve as a reminder of the power of coming together. events like these is a great way to network, learn, and

For those looking to stay engaged, participating in contribute to the thriving Wenatchee community.



Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce
The Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce hosted their annual banquet. A beautiful event with incredibly decorated tables and a celebration of the valley!



Welcome



Arbor Care



Globe Life Insurance - Tiffany Gering



CMG Home Loans - Monica Simmons



Morton Buildings



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AMY YALEY
COO of Ward Media



Crafting your brand

The importance of a consistent presence

Achieving long-term business success requires more than just offering great products or services – it requires a strategic approach.

A well-structured marketing plan serves as a roadmap for sustainable growth.

Defining your business identity shapes your marketing efforts and keeps you on the right path.

What makes your business unique, and how does it stand out among competitors?

Answering these questions brings clarity and forms the foundation for effective communication with your customers.

The next step is to build brand awareness around your business.

Awareness campaigns help create recognition and connect with your audience in a meaningful way.

However, it's not just

about being seen – it's about securing a place in the minds of your customers so that when they need a product or service, they think of you first.

Let's apply a real-world scenario to this concept. XYZ Pretty Furniture is a locally owned furniture store that faced stiff competition from national retailers and online brands.

Despite offering high-quality, handcrafted pieces and personalized service, the store struggles to be the first name that comes to mind when local customers need home furnishings.

To address this, XYZ Pretty Furniture focuses on consistency and visibility.

They refined their messaging around quality craftsmanship, affordability, and service, using the tagline, "Beautiful Homes Begin Here."

This message appeared in all marketing materi-



STOCK PHOTO

als, from in-store displays to direct mail campaigns.

Recognizing the power of traditional media, XYZ Pretty Furniture invests in newspaper and magazine advertising, ensuring their brand is present where local homeowners look for inspiration.

They also used direct mail to send exclusive offers and catalogs to past customers and new residents who have moved into the area to reinforce their brand presence.

Community engagement plays a significant

role in their strategy. XYZ Pretty Furniture sponsors local community events, collaborates with interior designers for in-store events, and partners with real estate agents to furnish model homes.

The store also launched a "Support Local Saturdays" campaign, offering discounts to customers who shopped at other local businesses, strengthening ties with the community.

Another key factor was

their loyalty program. By offering incentives for repeat purchases and referrals, XYZ Pretty Furniture kept customers engaged and encouraged word-of-mouth marketing.

Customers who brought in friends or family received special discounts, increasing both retention and new customer acquisition.

After six months of consistent effort, XYZ Pretty Furniture saw measurable results. Sales increased, and customer surveys showed a significant jump in brand recall – more people thought of XYZ Pretty Furniture first when considering furniture purchases.

Their loyalty program participation grew, proving that a steady and strategic presence keeps customers engaged.

The success of XYZ

Pretty Furniture reinforces a key principle: consistency builds familiarity, trust, and reliability. A business that regularly engages with its audience through advertising, events, and direct outreach strengthens its brand's position in the marketplace.

As you plan your marketing efforts this year, remember that brand awareness isn't just about being recognized – it's about being remembered. Through steady, strategic engagement, you can establish your brand as the first choice in your industry.

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

Real Estate

Top Properties Douglas County Jan 2025

Residential

Sale Price	Address	Total Acres	Year Built	Residential Area	Basement Area	Bedr.	Bathr.	Garage Area
315,000	13, FREEMONT AVE	0.24	1949	1426		3.00	2.00	
325,000	845, N MACAW AVE	0.19		0				
325,000	296, SE VANEMILY DR	1.78	2023	1456		1	1.5	624
345,000	891, GARDEN PLZ	0.17	1996	1232		3.00	2.00	
347,900	1943, N Mineral PI	0.25	2024	1396		3	2	550
379,900	1939, N Mineral PI	0.2	2024	1505		3	2	520
380,000	733, HIGHLINE DR	0.45	1984	1782		3.00	2.00	864
450,000	1305, TERRACE CT NE	0.21	1956	2008	432	3.00	2.00	432
456,000	568, S JULI AVE	0.16		0				
520,000	2512, NW CASCADE AVE	1.29	1949	1836	1260	3.00	2.00	325
625,000	464, HAWTHORN CT NW	0.3	2017	1848		3.00	2.00	648
727,500	1806, 10TH PL NE	0.29	2005	1866	1866	5.00	2.75	904
750,000	3033, N BRECKENRIDGE DR	0.26	2021	2552		3	2.5	810
785,000	846, BRIARWOOD DR	0.39	2006	1520	1520	5.00	3.00	852

Farm

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
SERENDIPITY LIMITED LLC	VB BTS III LLC	4,000	2124 GRANT RD	2.58
CORNING, JOSHUA J	VAZQUEZ, MARTIN G. & ERMA	5,500	BLUE GRADE RD	19.7
CORNING & SONS LLC	ANTONIO VAZQUEZ-PRADO & MA DEL ROSARIO LOMELI URENDIA	49,900		19.7
DAVY, MARTIN & LISA	ROBINSON, DANIEL R.	229,900	102 S Valiant Dr	1.15

Commercial

Seller	Buyer	Sale Price	Street	Total Acres
GOLDEN EGG LLC	HARNISH GROUP INC	\$2,450,000	5535 BAKER FLATS DR	3.33

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Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County

February 2025

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
MDO CHELAN LLC	RRJ REAL PROPERTIES LLC	4,800,000	4025 US HWY 97A	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
JET PRO WENATCHEE LLC	CRYSTAL CREEK PROPERTIES LLC	3,460,000	1660 N WENATCHEE AVE	WENATCHEE	3088	2005			0	N	N
GREENACRES AND WORTHEN ST LLC	DREGER SECURITY LLC	3,000,000	151 S WORTHEN ST	WENATCHEE	9820	1994			0	N	N
HR LLC	BOONE CARMEN M & CHRISTOPHER R	2,666,500	3501 CHELAN BLVD	MANSON	2950	1997	3	3	572	Y	Y
STIDOLPH REID L & DOREEN J	PATTERSON MICHAEL L & ROHDE GRETCHEN A	1,760,000	22910 LAKE WENATCHEE HWY	LAKE WENATCHEE	2079	1995	3	3	572	N	N
SINCLAIR MATTHEW & KATHRYN REVCBLE LIVING TRUST	PETERSON AIKEN	1,400,000	5674 MOUNTAIN LANE RD	PESHASTIN	3128	2020	2	2.5	0	N	Y
CRAFT PROPERTY HOLDING 3 LLC	MURO PROPERTIES LLC	1,300,000	1500 N WENATCHEE AVE	WENATCHEE	5428	1974			0	N	N
MCELMURRY JO ANN	FUHRER-JUVET FRANK	1,100,000	12211 DETILLION RD	LEAVENWORTH	2358	2003			1092	N	N
TRAN PAUL P & TINA H	WILKS MATTHEW W & SUE A	1,060,000	21116 LARIAT RD	PLAIN	1905	2016	3	1.75	390	N	Y
MENOYD LLC ETAL	AYLWARD J PATRICK & PEGGY D	1,020,000	819 N MILLER ST	WENATCHEE	6388	1992			0	N	N
T & K GREEN PROPERTIES LLC	RUSSELL DANIEL D & CYNTHIA L	1,000,000	3100 FAIRVIEW CANYON RD	MONITOR	1260	1906	2	1	0	N	N
GRAYHAWK REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS LLC	CLUTE ROGER H & MARSHA A	990,000	16889 MULE TAIL FLATS RD	PLAIN	1617	1993	2	2	720	N	Y
HUFFER ANDREW & KRUEGER KATHARINE	JANSEN MARKUS & BIRGIT	910,550	16724 LAKEVIEW DR	LAKE WENATCHEE	1248	1977	3	1.75	1080	N	Y
KC 1889 LLC & HRC LLC	POLTZ RANDALL B & KATHRYN E	839,000	736 S WENATCHEE AVE	WENATCHEE	10000	1929			0	N	N
EASTMAN THERESE & GREG	MACK RICHARD D & CONNIE M	812,500	1438 APPLERIDGE ST	WENATCHEE	3001	2002	3	2.75	1017	N	N
KIM GEORGE & MATSON YVETTE M	FRIES JANETTE J	779,900	405 VALLEY VIEW DR	CASHMERE	1482	1959		2.25	504	N	Y
D AMBROSIA LEAH A & EVERIST NICHOLAS F	RUSSELL BRIAN THOMAS & DEBRA CLOUGH	775,000	19525 NASON RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	1164	1997	2	1.5	0	N	Y
MARBETT CHERI & PHILIP	PHILLIPS MARY B & JOHN S	770,000	6261 FOREST RIDGE DR	WENATCHEE	2640	1985	3	4	750	N	Y
AYMOND ASHLEY N	BELL LEA	748,000	130 N FRANKLIN AVE	WENATCHEE	1848	1930	3	2	720	N	Y
FUHRER JUVET FRANK & ADELE	OHRAZDA MELVIN L & KAREN M	726,500	149 SUN VALLEY DR	WENATCHEE	2148	2013	3	1.75	752	N	Y
RUNKEL ART & ANN	GRITZNER SARAH R	715,000	519 N WILSON ST	CHELAN	1795	2014	3	1.75	441	N	Y
ARRAMBIDE TODD M	KELLY-WOLFE CAITLIN	699,950	12725 S LAKESHORE RD	CHELAN	3841	1989		3.5	200	N	Y
HONEY BADGER BEACH LLC	NELSON BRADLEY D ETAL	695,000	2395 LAKESHORE DR	MANSON	192	2019			0	N	N
PATTERSON MICHAEL L & ROHDE GRETCHEN A	GRAHAM JOSIAH R & TARAH L	695,000	901 RACINE SPRINGS DR	WENATCHEE	1709	2022	3	1.75	583	N	Y
RAMIREZ MATIAS O & ZAVALA ELIAS MA T	TOEVS JACOB K & KAI T	694,000	136 SUMMER BREEZE RD	MANSON	1956	2015	3	2.25	894	N	Y
GOSNEY KEITH A & KIMIKO	BASSETT WILLIAM E & KATHLEEN S BELSKY	675,000	100 LAKE CHELAN SHORES DR	CHELAN	1025	0			0	N	N
LATIMER GARY M & JILL R	COLEMAN SAM	620,000	4626 WHISPERING RIDGE DR	WENATCHEE	1465	1995	4	3	625	N	N
SUTHERLAND JERID M & JENNIFER R	HILL STEVEN C CREDIT SHELTER TRUST	600,000	15450 ENTIAT RIVER RD	ENTIAT	1589	1991	3	2	0	N	Y
MASSEY ROBERT D & AMY S	SIENNA 41 LLC	599,990	215 SIENNA RD	WENATCHEE	1895	2021	3	2.5	508	N	Y
SUMMERS TREVER ETAL	LEWIS KYLE P & RUTH K	597,500	1201 CASTLEROCK AVE	WENATCHEE	3234	1920	5	2.5	312	N	Y
MC CORMICK SHANE W ETAL	MC LUCAS FRANK T	585,000	3647 BURCHVALE RD	WENATCHEE	2103	2008	3	2.5	583	N	N
WHITEHEAD JIM & JILL REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST	EATON CRAIG F	583,000	2108 W HONEYSETT RD	WENATCHEE	1514	2011	3	3.5	0	N	N
VANDERWERFF BRIAN N & SUZANNE M REVCBLE LVNG TRST	SCHWARTZ KENNETH/SANDRA	549,000	808 W MANSON RD	CHELAN	1105	0			0	N	N
SCHAIBLE ALAN & LINDSAY R	TAYLOR AMELIA C	543,500	22417 STIRRUP RD	PLAIN	1326	1987	3	2	864	N	N
KNIGHT LINDSAY R & DUSTIN J L	PEPIN ROBYN & NATHAN	535,000	1916 2ND ST	WENATCHEE	1880	1995	3	1.75	528	N	N
TOLLEFSON KARIN A ETAL	TORRENS REVOCABLE TRUST	533,000	1622 WASHINGTON ST	WENATCHEE	1712	1964	3	1.75	720	N	Y
CANDA MARLON & JENNIFER	HAGER RICHARD L TRUST	530,000	183 GALLAGHER RD	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
BROWNLEE DOUGLAS & BETTY	JOHNSON SCOTT D	530,000	235 PARKWAY DR	MANSON	1535	2005			340	N	Y
ICE KECIA B & BALERUD JOHN A	HARVILL MICHAEL R	525,000	1598 BRITINI DR	WENATCHEE	1404	2008			0	N	N
GUDMUNDSON MURRAY A	POTTS LINDA L	515,000	804 WILLOWBROOK DR	WENATCHEE	1514	1998	3	2	878	N	N
NELSON ERIC W & JEAN LS	GREENWALT REVOCABLE LIVING TRUST	514,900	1740 CENTRAL AVE	WENATCHEE	1746	0			0	N	N
JOHNSON MICHAEL C	FATKIN GARY & SANZO FATKIN SHERRI	500,000	2765 UNION VALLEY RD	CHELAN	0	0			0	N	N
NOLAND EDWARD & ADKINSON FERN	ODONNELL ALBERT & JULIA	499,000	1712 TERREA CT	WENATCHEE	1820	1996	3	2.5	378	N	N
WHITE ERICK & AMBER	WEBB AMANDA J	499,000	216 SUMMIT AVE	LEAVENWORTH	1321	1945	2	1	0	N	N
JOHNSON CAROL L	JORDAHL KAREN	490,000	804 KITTITAS ST	WENATCHEE	1244	1928	3	1.75	650	N	Y
WURTH KIMBERLEE M	HOLM MARIESA M & MATTHEW P	485,000	21518 CAMP 12 RD	PLAIN	944	1978	1	.75	0	N	Y
ANDERSON PAIGE	LEIGHTON SARA A	470,000	18690 RIECHE RD	LAKE WENATCHEE	1272	1978	2	1.5	576	N	N
RUELAS BANUELOS ANAMARIA & RIVERA ANDRES A	VIVA WENATCHEE LLC	456,585	27 BENJAMIN PL	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
WAGNER DAVID R II & DIANE E	VIVA WENATCHEE LLC	451,212	41 BENJAMIN PL	MALAGA	0	0			0	N	N
BATCHELOR JAY	KAMEI INC	450,000	905 SUNRISE DR	MANSON	1512	1992			440	N	N
STEWART PEGGY A & ARON C	ENGLAND LEONARD C	450,000	904 LLOYD RD	MANSON	0	0			0	N	N
KENT JOSHUA A & PERALTA ALEXIA P	MELISSA KISER 401K TRUST	446,000	631 KITTITAS ST	WENATCHEE	908	1939	3	2	240	N	N

Real Estate

Top Properties Chelan County February 2025

Buyer	Seller	Sale Price	Address	City	Living Area	Year Built	Bed-rooms	Bath-rooms	Garage Area	Pool	Fire-place
GUTIERREZ NOE & PADILLA MONICA D	WACHTEL PHYLLIS E	444,900	1492 OKANOGAN AVE	WENATCHEE	1655	2005	3	2	528	N	N
VARGAS BRIANDA & MENDOZA ESTEBAN	IRON BACK MIKE LLC	441,000	116 BEVERLY LN	MALAGA	1348	2024	3	2	362.5	N	N
CASTILLO DIAZ EZEQUIEL & CASTILLO MAYTE I	RINCON INVESTMENTS LLC	439,000	1222 MONTANA ST	WENATCHEE	1506	1952	3	1	0	N	N
KING CODY S	ARRELL AYSIA & AUSTIN	420,000	1022 YALE AVE	WENATCHEE	1096	1956	3	1.75	432	N	N
RUSSELL CONRAD L & LISA M	SUTTON JASON C & DANIKA M	410,000	2220 W WOODIN AVE	CHELAN	884	0			0	N	N
STEWART TONY D & ALLEN MAKAYLA	BJORK KEVIN A & BARTO EMILY G	405,000	518 OKANOGAN AVE	WENATCHEE	1620	1912	4	2	374	N	Y
KENGAIL PROPERTIES LLC	ORPET ROBERT & ANGELA	384,000	602 MARJO ST	WENATCHEE	1148	1960	3	1.5	252	N	Y
GAMMANN SIMMONS NATHAN ETAL	MC CARTHY COREY J & ROMERO VANIA M ETAL	378,450	3636 COTTONWOOD LN	PESHASTIN	700	1968	2	1	0	N	N
DE ROUSSE SUSAN M	SAGE HOMES LLC	374,900	43 SALMON DR	WENATCHEE	1757	2024	3	1.75	552	N	Y
AULD PADDY LLC	SKELLY WILLIAM GRAHAM & MARILYN M	370,000	1902 W PROSPECT ST	CHELAN	825	1969			0	N	N
NATIONAL TRANSFER SERVICES LLC	HUCK TAYLOR	360,000	606 LEWIS ST	WENATCHEE	983	1920	3	2	288	N	N
FACIO AVINA CORINA & AVINA ADRIAN SR ETAL	NATIONAL TRANSFER SERVICES LLC	360,000	606 LEWIS ST	WENATCHEE	983	1920	3	2	288	N	N
THAYER HARDY	SAGE HOMES LLC	359,900	31 SALMON DR	WENATCHEE	0	0			0	N	N

Home sales rise 4.2% in February as buyers slowly return to market

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Existing-home sales increased 4.2% in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.26 million homes, according to data released by the National Association of Realtors. Despite the monthly gain, sales remained 1.2% below levels from a year ago.

The median price for existing homes climbed to \$398,400, marking a 3.8% increase from February 2024 and continuing a 20-month streak of year-over-year price growth.

“Home buyers are slowly entering the market,” said NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun. “Mortgage rates have not changed much, but more inventory and choices are releasing pent-up housing demand.”

Housing inventory expanded to 1.24 million units at the end of February, up 5.1% from January and 17% higher than one year ago. This represents a 3.5-month supply at the current sales pace, unchanged from January but higher than the 3.0-month

supply recorded in February 2024.

Yun noted that raw sales figures were affected by calendar differences. “On a technical note, raw sales in February were down 5.2% from last year, which was a leap year with one extra day of business,” he said. “However, after adjusting for this effect, combined with the winter seasonal factors, the momentum for home sales is flashing encouraging signs.”

The economist also highlighted the wealth

impact of rising home values. “Each one percentage point gain in home price translates into an approximately \$350 billion increase in housing equity for American property owners,” Yun said. “That means a gain of nearly \$1.3 trillion in home value appreciation at a time when the current stock market is undergoing a correction. Moreover, the ongoing housing shortage, coupled with historically low mortgage default rates, implies a solid foundation for home values.”

First-time buyers accounted for 31% of February sales, up from 28% in January and 26% a year ago. This represents a notable improvement from

the historic low of 24% for the annual share of first-time buyers reported in NAR’s 2024 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers released last November.

Cash transactions made up 32% of February sales, increasing from 29% in January but down from 33% in February 2024. Individual investors and second-home buyers, who often make cash purchases, represented 16% of the market, down from 17% in January and 21% a year ago.

Properties typically remained on the market for 42 days in February, slightly longer than the 41 days in January and 38 days in February 2024.

According to Freddie Mac, the 30-year fixed-

rate mortgage averaged 6.65% as of March 13, slightly up from 6.63% the previous week but down from 6.74% a year ago.

Single-family home sales increased 5.7% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.89 million in February, though this was 0.3% below the previous year’s level. The median price for single-family homes reached \$402,500, up 3.7% from February 2024.

In contrast, sales of existing condominiums and co-ops declined 9.8% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 370,000 units, also down 9.8% from a year ago. The median existing condo price rose to \$355,100, representing a 3.5% increase from the prior year.

Beau Ruff

Continued from page 3

In my scenario above, the out-of-pocket cost is \$72,000.

Now let’s look to net worth to determine whether the assets (versus the income) can cover that expenditure. Assume a person has a house valued at \$500k and bank and investments of \$500k in this same scenario. It appears then that this individual can cover the likely cost of long-term care without

either significant cost to heirs and without employing more expensive and sophisticated strategies. But the decision is personal.

In any event, armed with the analysis of cost and assets available, the consumer is in a position to determine whether long term care planning is cost effective or even necessary.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recom-

mendations 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.

Regional variations

February showed mixed performance across U.S. regions, with the West posting the strongest monthly gains at 13.3% while the Northeast declined. Year-over-year, the Northeast and Midwest recorded positive growth, the West remained stable, and the South experienced a decline. All regions saw median price increases, with the Northeast leading at 10.4% year-over-year growth.

Northeast

Sales decreased 2.0% from January to an annual rate of 500,000, but rose 4.2% from February 2024. Median price: \$464,300, up 10.4% from one year earlier.

Midwest

Sales held steady with no change from January at an annual rate of 1 million, showing a 1.0% gain from the prior year. Median price: \$295,500, up 5.8% from February 2024.

South

Sales increased 4.4% from January to an annual rate of 1.91 million in February, but remained 4.0% below one year before. Median price: \$358,800, up 1.9% from last year.

West

Sales jumped 13.3% in February to an annual rate of 850,000, identical to the level from a year ago. Median price: \$614,600, up 3.6% from February 2024.

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Local author Teri Fink wins multiple literary awards

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

Local author Teri Fink, who has spent most of her life in Wenatchee, has received several prestigious literary honors for her novels, including the Legacy Fiction Award from the 15th Annual International Book Awards.

Fink's second novel, "The Clovis Dig," which tells the story of an East Wenatchee orchardist who discovers ancient artifacts beneath the orchard, earned the top prize in the Legacy Fiction category. Jeffrey Keen, President and CEO of American Book Fest, which manages the award, said this year's contest yielded thousands of entries from authors and publishers around the world before being narrowed down to the final results.

Her third novel, "The Restless Lake," has been named a finalist for the Eric Hoffer Award, which honors the memory of the American philosopher by highlighting excellence in writing and the independent spirit of small pub-

lishers. The novel, which



Teri Fink

chronicles the meeting of a tech executive and an Olympic gold medalist in the wilderness community of Stehekin at the head of Lake Chelan, has also been nominated by Eric Hoffer judges for the Montaigne Medal, recognizing it as one of the most thought-provoking books that "either illuminate, progress, or redirect thought."

Additionally, the audiobook version of Fink's first novel, "Invisible by Day," a historical fiction work in the vein of Downton Abbey, has been named a finalist in The Wishing Shelf Audiobook Awards. Narrator Grace Gray, a professionally trained ac-

tress, brings the audiobook to life. The Wishing Shelf is an organization based in the United Kingdom founded by children's author Edward Trayer.

"We always knew Teri Fink was a talented writer, a real pro, which is why we were thrilled to bring her on board," says Fink's publisher Dave Lane of Evolved Publishing LLC. "Nonetheless, the responses to all of her books by award sites, professional reviewers, and book consumers alike have exceeded even our high expectations. Her books leave a lasting impression in the best way for readers."

"I'm thrilled that all three of my novels are receiving recognition," says Fink.

Fink's novels are available in paperback, eBook, and audiobook formats. They can be purchased locally at A Book for All Seasons in Leavenworth, Ye Olde Bookshoppe in Wenatchee, and Riverwalk Books in Chelan.

The novels and audiobooks are also sold online wherever books and audiobooks are sold.

iPro Building Services named to Inc.'s 2025 Fastest-Growing Pacific Companies list

Ward Media | Wenatchee Business Journal

iPro Building Services has been named No. 127 on Inc. magazine's fifth annual Inc. Regionals: Pacific list, marking the company's third consecutive year on the ranking of fastest-growing private companies in the Pacific region.

The announcement highlights iPro Building Services' sustained growth among companies in California, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii, and Alaska.

The full-service janitorial company operates across Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, specializing in com-

mercial cleaning, facility maintenance, and customized cleaning solutions.

"It's truly an honor to be recognized by Inc. Magazine for the third year in a row as one of the fastest-growing companies in the Pacific Region. When people think of fast-growing companies on the West Coast, they often think of tech, medical, or manufacturing – but iPro has cemented its name among them. This achievement is a testament to the dedication of our entire team. Thank you to everyone at iPro for making this pos-

sible!" said Edwin Eaton, Owner of iPro Building Services.

The 2025 Inc. Regionals: Pacific list features 1,021 private companies that demonstrated significant economic impact between 2021 and 2023. These companies collectively achieved a median growth rate of 124 percent, added 7,947 jobs, and contributed \$5.6 billion to the region's economy by 2023.

iPro Building Services attributes its success to its company culture and employee-focused initiatives.

"At iPro Building Services, our success is driven by a people-first culture that values teamwork, growth, and recognition. Through our ACE – Always Celebrate Employees initiative, we ensure that every team member feels empowered and appreciated, knowing that a strong company culture fuels exceptional service," the company stated in the announcement.

Bonny Ghosh, editorial



COURTESY OF IPRO BUILDING SERVICES
Members of the iPro Building Services team gather at their East Wenatchee office to celebrate being named No. 127 on Inc. magazine's 2025 Regionals: Pacific list.

See IPRO BUILDING Page 16

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Career & Workplace

Colleen Malmassari

Contributor for Ward Media



Leveraging job descriptions

Spring is in the air, and so is springtime hiring. This time of year, is often full of hiring for seasonal positions throughout organizations to keep up with demand in the warmer months.

Whether it's hiring for a busy tourist season or needing extra help for harvest this time of year is a great opportunity to grow your team.

A key, often overlooked, element for excellent recruiting and performance management is creating and maintaining accurate and comprehensive job descriptions.

These documents are the foundation for legal compliance and effective employee performance management.

Framework of success

Given the complexities of employment law, proactive measures are crucial to ensure compliance and minimize potential litigation.

Accurate job descriptions serve as a key line of defense for organizations in several ways. They form the cornerstone of fair hiring practices by focusing on essential skills, experience, and qualifications, and avoiding discriminatory language, which ensures a transparent and equitable hiring process. While they don't determine FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) status (exempt/salary vs. nonexempt/hourly), job descriptions provide vital documentation for wage and hour compliance, par-

ticularly for exempt positions where duties should align with specific FLSA requirements.

In termination situations, they serve as critical evidence against wrongful termination claims, demonstrating that employees were informed of job requirements and failed to meet expectations.

Finally, concerning ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance, well-drafted job descriptions clearly articulate the essential functions of a role, providing a framework for making informed decisions regarding accommodation requests for qualified individuals with disabilities.

Effective job Descriptions

Beyond legal protection, well-constructed job descriptions act as a guiding framework that promotes clarity and facilitates success in several ways. They establish clear expectations by explicitly defining tasks, responsibilities, and performance standards, thereby eliminating ambiguity and ensuring a shared understanding from the start, which is vital for employee effectiveness.

Furthermore, job descriptions provide a robust foundation for objective and meaningful performance evaluations, allowing managers to conduct fair, transparent, and productive reviews by evaluating an employee's performance against specific duties and expectations. By clearly articulating the



STOCK PHOTO

required skills and knowledge for each role, job descriptions also guide employee development, helping organizations pinpoint areas where employees may need further training, thus enabling the creation of targeted programs and opportunities for career advancement.

Lastly, a well-defined job description optimizes the hiring process by attracting qualified candidates through clear communication of the role's requirements and responsibilities, allowing prospective applicants to self-select and ensuring that recruitment efforts focus on individuals genuinely suited for the position and the company culture.

Investment for the future

Investing time in creating clear, accurate, and legally sound job descriptions not only helps avoid potential issues but also sets your team up for success and drives your business forward. To maximize the benefits of these descriptions, organizations can follow several best practices. Start by including essential information

such as the job title, department, reporting structure, and a concise company and role overview. Clearly list the essential job functions using action verbs and specific details, and specify the necessary education, experience, and technical and soft skills required for success.

Regularly update job descriptions to reflect the evolving responsibilities

and requirements of the role and collaborate with managers and team members to gather input, ensuring the descriptions accurately reflect the realities of the job.

Investing in the creation and maintenance of accurate and comprehensive job descriptions is a strategic imperative for any organization seeking to mitigate legal risk, optimize employee performance, and drive sustained success. By recognizing the multifaceted benefits of well-crafted job descriptions, business leaders can establish a foundation for a compliant and engaged workforce.

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.

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

Tyler Kert

Continued from page 4

mance matters far less.

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The stock market will always have volatility, but history shows that it goes up over time.

Before you worry about

the market, make sure you've got your financial house in order. When you do, the market's ups and downs won't shake your confidence, they'll just be part of the ride.

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.

Riverwalk

Continued from page 5

inn and making it ever better than what we imagined when the new team took over management."

The Broken Compass Bakery and café, located

within the inn, will see expanded operations, including enhanced retail take-out options.

The outdoor seating area will be expanded for beverage service, and management is exploring potential marketing

partnerships with local wineries, cideries, and food delivery services.

The Riverwalk Park Inn is located at 204 East Wapato Street, across from Riverside Park and the Chelan River in downtown Chelan.



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In Downtown Wenatchee, a hidden gem of a store turns tragedy into triumph

Liliana's Fashion Boutique on South Wenatchee Avenue doesn't just sell dresses, as the name might imply, as you drive by. What owner Joaquin Granados sells is hope. What form it comes in is up to the buyer.

By **ANDREW SIMPSON** | Ward Media Staff Reporter

The recognizable storefront at 6 South Wenatchee Avenue is at the heart of downtown, and stands as a juxtaposition with the stores around it, despite selling much the same kind of merchandise and services.

Two doors north is Collins Fashion, where stylish women can get a new dress, coat, shoes, or even leisure and workwear. Two doors south is the old Mills Brothers building, housing Woody's Classic Man, which has the same kind of selection for men, including suits inside at Jim Dandy's Haberdashery, an impressive array of clothes, colognes, hats, shoes and even a barber shop.

Liliana's Boutique has

all of the same things, but for a different crowd: The large Hispanic and Latino population of Wenatchee. Sure, anyone can buy anything they like, but the style of clothes that Liliana's sells caters to a very specific demographic. That's not stereotypical by any means. It's just that culturally, the things that are important to that crowd are different, and those needs are Liliana's target market.

Teen girls come in with their mothers to buy a dress for their quinceañera. Parents get outfits for their kids' First Communion. A bride-to-be can look through their extensive catalog of wedding dresses, each in the traditional style that they grew up with. An immi-

grant from Michoacán or Sonora can come in and buy a sombrero de vaquero and a pair of matching boots just like the ones their father wore.

But being a one-stop fashion cultural center for 35% of the population of Wenatchee wasn't always where Liliana's was headed. Liliana Granados herself started out with a beauty salon. Her husband, Joaquin, was a truck driver when she started pursuing her dream, and they moved from location to location, expanding each time. At one point, Liliana's business savvy led her to become an owner of Taco Loco further down the Avenue in addition to the hair salon and boutique.

When the combined efforts of driving a truck delivering roofing supplies and coming home to run the restaurant became too much for Joaquin, she asked him to come work with her full time at Liliana's. And that, he says, turned out to be what he calls a "gift from God."

Joaquin will show you a video on his phone of his beautiful wife dancing on her birthday, August 16, back in 2023, in a fancy yellow dress covered in sunflowers that she de-

signed herself. He will tell you that no one could tell that night at the party at their home that she was sick. He will tell you that he refused to accept the stage four pancreatic cancer diagnosis she got in December when he took her to Confluence after increasing bouts of tiredness, headaches, and just a sense of something being "off."

He will tell you that before she passed on April 13, 2024, he took her to three of the most highly-respected clinics in Mexico, who all told him that the best thing he could do for her was to love her until the end. And he will say that the "gift from God" is that because he left trucking and sold the restaurant, he got to spend all of that time with her.

During the interview for this story, Joaquin excuses himself to help a longtime customer and friend from Omak who hadn't been in the store since 2022. She is devastated to find out that Liliana is gone, and cries with her daughters, who both got their quinceañera dresses here.

But the important part is that, in Spanish, Joaquin reassures the woman that the next time she's in town, he will still be here, and he bids her come visit again. Because he's not just keeping the business alive in Liliana's name. He's expanding again.



ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA
Believe it or not, there are more than 1,200 dresses for every occasion in this picture alone.

After Liliana passed, Joaquin could hardly stand to be reminded of the loss. He had donated all of her salon equipment to the hair academy just down the road.

Now, surrounding the back of the store is work in progress on a renovation project, turning racks into shelves, turning boxes into aisles, turning the storage area into a shopping area, and eventually reopening the hair salon. Two stylists' chairs in the back of the store, just the way it used to be, in the days when Joaquin remembers that women would come to get their hair done and walk out with a dress or blouse.

"When we had that salon with her, all kinds of people, they come over here to get the haircuts, and then they buy something," he said.

Upstairs, where Joaquin stores the shipments of dresses, he has a small photo studio where he

takes pictures of the new styles and uploads them to social media. And just a little further into the room, hanging in the center, is a bright yellow dress with sunflowers.

"I didn't like to look at all the other memories at first. But the only way I get rid of that dress is if I have an auction," he says, "and I donate the money to cancer research."

Back downstairs, Joaquin shows off the rest of the store. "This older lady, she came in, she's gonna have a party with all of her abuelita friends, so she bought six of these tiaras yesterday," he says. And looking down the aisles of the fanciest clothes you've ever seen, smelling the sawdust and paint of renewal, it starts to feel like all Joaquin sells now is hope.

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ANDREW SIMPSON/WARD MEDIA
Dress boots for women and men are a mainstay here at Liliana's, with traditional western wear a huge part of the culture this store serves.

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Alpenglō Living

Continued from page 1

business in a way that shared their interests and complemented each other's design skills.

As a public lands conservationist turned garden designer, Dewey helps homeowners become backyard stewards, cultivating their land to benefit the greater ecosystem.

Through Alpenglō Living, she offers landscape and garden design implementation, soil health consultation, crop rotation and integrated pest management guidance, and vegetation recommendations that incorporate native plants and pollinators.

Conversely, Davey offers interior and creative design services through the shop.

As a lifelong artist, Davey specializes in creative designs such as custom wallpaper and fabric designs, murals and sign painting, letterpress printed cards, and calligraphy. She also plans to offer interior design services that balance beauty with function.

"Community is at the heart of why we wanted to open this shop, and a big part of, I think, why we



TAYLOR CALDWELL / WARD MEDIA

The retail space is curated by Davey and Dewey to feature heirloom quality home and garden goods.

wanted it to be more than just a retail space, because we want to be benefiting our community in a positive way," said Dewey.

At the shop, the two hope to share their knowledge with the community through workshops and community events. Davey and Dewey designed their storefront with two long tables at the center, where tourists and locals alike can gather, spend time together, and learn a new skill.

"There's a few business owners that I just love... who are very interested in sharing knowledge. Which, I feel like sometimes knowledge is kept

secret, like we have to hold on to this. But, I think Bri agrees, that sharing of knowledge feels really awesome," said Dewey.

Through March, Alpenglō Living is offering spring dogwood hoop wreath making as a self-led creative project during business hours, providing materials, the space to create, and support.

In the near future, Dewey and Davey plan to schedule specialized evening and weekend workshops led by local artisans and experts.

*Taylor Caldwell:
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taylor@ward.media*

Winton

Continued from page 5

"Since partnering with Winton Manufacturing, we've cut our landfill contributions by more than 70%. The transition was seamless, and it's saved us money in waste disposal costs while reinforcing our commitment to sustainability."

Community Engagement and Environmental Impact

Beyond business partnerships, Winton Manufacturing is engaging the community in composting education and advocacy. From schools teaching students about sustainable waste management to homeowners participating in the community composting program, the movement is gaining momentum. Winton's compost is used in public parks,

home gardens, and agricultural fields, enriching the soil and promoting healthier landscapes.

Additionally, composting plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Organic waste left in landfills produces methane, a potent contributor to climate change. By diverting this waste and converting it into compost, Winton is actively mitigating environmental harm while supporting regenerative agriculture practices.

Join the Movement

For businesses looking to enhance their sustainability efforts, Winton Manufac-



turing makes the transition to composting simple. Their team provides on-site evaluations, tailored waste collection programs, and employee training to ensure smooth implementation. "Once businesses understand how easy it is to compost with Winton, they realize it's not just about reducing waste – it's about being part of a larger movement for environmental responsibility," said Robbette Schmit of Winton Manufacturing.

As North Central Washington continues to grow, Winton Manufacturing is ensuring that growth is sustainable.

By turning waste into opportunity, they are not only protecting the environment but also fostering economic resilience in the region.

Want to learn more? Visit wintonmfg.com to see how your business or household can contribute to a greener future.

iPro Building

Continued from page 13

director at Inc., described the honorees as "true trailblazers driving economic growth in their respective regions, industries, and beyond."

To qualify for the Inc.

Regionals list, companies must have been founded and generating revenue by March 31, 2021, be U.S.-based, privately held, for-profit, and independent as of December 31, 2023.

Companies were required to have minimum revenue of \$100,000 in

2021 and \$1 million in 2023.

Complete results of the Inc. Regionals: Pacific, including company profiles and an interactive database sortable by industry and metro area, can be found at <https://www.inc.com/regionals/pacific>.

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